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Are L2 Speakers Allowed to Use Colloquialisms? L1 Attitudes Toward Spanish L2 Speakers' Use
of Informal Lexical Items

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

by

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DEDICATION

For Mom and Dad, who gave me every advantage imaginable.

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ABSTRACT

Are L2 Speakers Allowed to Use Colloquialisms? L1 Attitudes Toward Spanish L2 Speakers' Use
of Informal Lexical Items

by

Stefan Karsten DuBois

Extensive literature demonstrates that, with extended contact and high integrative motivation, L2 speakers gradually acquire L2 nonstandard variation over time as a result of interaction with speakers of the target language (Dewaele & Regan 2001, Dewaele 2002, Nagy et al. 2003, Raish 2015, Salgado-Robles 2011). Yet, some learners fear that adopting nonstandard variation would be inauthentic (Kingtoner and Farrell 2004, Ringer-Hilfinger 2012, Trosset 1986), and various pedagogical models and scholarly works advocate against the dangers of overaccommodation, arguing that native speakers expect language learners to set a linguistic target more socially prestigious than the vernacular common to the L1 community (Andreasson 1994, Auger & Valdman 1999, Christophersen 1973, Saville-Troike 2003, Valdman 1988). The question of how native speakers perceive L2 use of nonstandard variation has received little attention in terms of empirical studies, and results have been conflicting among the few works which have investigated the issue. Some have found that L1 speakers respond negatively to such language use (Prodromou 2007, Ruivivar & Collins 2018, Swacker 1976) while others indicate the opposite (Beaulieu 2016; George 2013, 2014, 2017).

The present study sought to clarify these conflicting findings by investigating the attitudes of L1 speakers of Peninsular Spanish to the use of colloquial lexical items by L1 speakers of English. The study utilized a matched guise methodology (Lambert et al. 1960), asking over 200 participants to evaluate audio samples of L1 and L2 speakers using colloquial language which was selected according to a corpus analysis of Peninsular Spanish. Participants assessed the speakers according to factors such as linguistic proficiency, the appropriateness of language use according to context, and personality traits corresponding with the dimensions of status, solidarity, and dynamism common to language attitudes research (Giles & Billings 2004, Zahn & Hopper 1985). The results of the study found that the use of colloquial language did not quantitatively correlate with significantly higher or lower measures of linguistic proficiency on a broad level, despite its use being highly salient to participants. In terms of measures of contextual appropriateness and personality ratings, the study found that L2 speakers experience many of the same disadvantages suffered by native speakers when using nonstandard language—for example, being downgraded on personality characteristics associated with status (successful, intelligent, etc.)—but they do not have the same level of access to corresponding advantages, such as increased ratings of traits indicating solidarity (sociable, friendly, etc.). While these results verify to some degree the existence of a double standard in attitudes toward nonstandard language use according to the speaker's L1, the lack of concrete benefits available to L2 speakers using colloquial language constituted a bigger drawback than any outright negative associations made with its use; what negative associations did exist were by and large those experienced by L1 speakers, and these were not so negative as to justify theoretical arguments in the literature advocating the wholesale avoidance of its production. Instead, the results of this study suggest that so long as L2 users are aware of the potential risks associated with using such language, there seems to be no reason to discourage its production.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Vita	v
Abstract	vii
Table of Contents	ix
List of Figures	xiii
List of Tables	xiv
Chapter 1—Introduction	
I. GENERAL BACKGROUND	1
II. DEFINITION OF COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE	3
III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS	5
IV. OVERVIEW	7
Chapter 2— L2 Nonstandard Variation: Theoretical Perspectives	
I. INTRODUCTION	8
II. KEY TERMS AND THEORIES	9
1. Communication Accommodation Theory	6
2. Language Socialization Theory	12
3. Gardner’s Socio-educational Model	13
4. Stylization, Crossing, Styling, and Passing	14
5. Covert Prestige	17
6. Hypercorrection/Hypocorrection	19
7. Summary	21
III. THE DOUBLE STANDARD AGAINST L2 NONSTANDARD VARIATION	22
1. The Pedagogical Norm	23

2. Evidence in Favor of the Existence of a Double Standard	27
3. Evidence Against the Existence of a Double Standard	32
4. Summary	39
IV. L2 ACQUISITION OF NONSTANDARD VARIATION	40
1. Studies Investigating L2 Adoption of Nonstandard Variation	40
2. What do L2 Learners Say About Their Experience?	45
2.1. Examples of Learners Reluctant to Use Nonstandard Variants	46
2.1.1. In Order to Accentuate Foreignness/Preserve Their Own Identity (The “Charles Boyer Phenomenon”)	46
2.1.2. Inappropriate Outside Target Community	49
2.1.3. Negative Attitude	50
2.1.4. Linguistic Insecurity	50
2.1.5. Summary	51
2.2. Examples of Learners Wanting to Use More Nonstandard Variants	52
2.2.1. Feelings of Limitation	52
2.2.2. Desire to Acculturate	53
2.3. Summary and Justification for Current Study	54
 Chapter 3—Methodology	
I. INTRODUCTION	55
II. INSTRUMENTS	57
1. Scripts	57
2. Speaker Profiles	62
3. Questionnaire	65
III. PILOT STUDY	70
IV. PARTICIPANTS	72
V. PROCEDURE	73
VI. CONCLUSION	74
 Chapter 4—Results and Analysis	
I. INTRODUCTION	75
II. PERCEPTIONS OF LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY	75
1. Global Language Competence	77
2. Pronunciation	79
3. Comprehensibility	82

4. Written Responses	83
5. Summary	87
III. PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONALITY TRAITS	89
1. Principal Components Analysis	90
2. Status	92
3. Solidarity/Dynamism	95
4. Summary	99
IV. PERCEPTIONS OF CONTEXTUAL APPROPRIATENESS	99
1. Formal Context	100
2. Informal Context	102
3. Written Responses	103
4. Summary	105
V. PERCEPTIONS OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR L2 SPEAKERS	106
1. Numeric Results	107
2. Written Responses	108
3. Summary	115
VI. FACTORS EXCLUDED FROM CONDITIONAL INFERENCE TREES	116
VII. DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS	118
1. Opinions on Use of Colloquial Language by L2 Speakers	118
2. Participant Anecdotes of Encounters with L2 Speakers Employing Colloquial Language	126
VIII. SUMMARY	132
Chapter 5—Conclusions	
I. INTRODUCTION	134
II. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS	134
III. GENERAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY	138
IV. LIMITATIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND CONCLUSION	140
References	142

Appendices

A.	Complete DP and Frequency List from CdE	161
B.	Scripts	165
	1. Experimental Scripts	165
	2. Distractor Script	166
	3. Original Passages from which Scripts were Adapted	166
C.	Questionnaire	167
	1. Items evaluating <i>global language competence, pronunciation, and comprehensibility</i>	167
	2. Items evaluating <i>appropriateness</i> according to context	167
	3. Items evaluating <i>appropriateness</i> for use by L2 speaker	168
	4. Items evaluating <i>status</i> and <i>solidarity/ dynamism</i>	168
	5. Debriefing essay questions	169
	6. Items evaluating <i>tolerance</i> scale	170
D.	Additional Conditional Inference Trees	171
E.	Standard Deviation and Proportion of Variance for Principal Components Analysis	173
F.	List of Colloquialisms Cited by Participants in Debriefing Question #2	173

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: <i>Global language competence</i> conditional inference tree.....	77
Figure 2: <i>Pronunciation</i> conditional inference tree.....	80
Figure 3: <i>Comprehensibility</i> conditional inference tree.....	82
Figure 4: <i>Status</i> conditional inference tree, neutral register.....	93
Figure 5: <i>Status</i> conditional inference tree, colloquial register.....	94
Figure 6: <i>Solidarity/ dynamism</i> conditional inference tree, female gender.....	96
Figure 7: <i>Solidarity/ dynamism</i> conditional inference tree, male gender.....	97
Figure 8: <i>Appropriateness in formal context</i> conditional inference tree.....	100
Figure 9: <i>Appropriateness in informal context</i> conditional inference tree.....	102
Figure 10: <i>Appropriateness for L2 speaker</i> conditional inference tree.....	107
Figure 11: <i>Global language competence</i> ratings of distractor.....	172
Figure 12: Complete <i>status</i> conditional inference tree.....	173
Figure 13: Complete <i>solidarity/ dynamism</i> conditional inference tree.....	173

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Colloquial words with lowest DP and highest frequency	61
Table 2: Independent variables related to speaker characteristics.....	65
Table 3: Frequency of use of colloquial items reported in pilot study.....	71
Table 4: Factor loadings for personality characteristics.....	91
Table 5: Debriefing question #1 opinions according to L1 of colloquial guise.....	119

Chapter 1

Introduction

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The field of variationist sociolinguistics, originating in the studies of William Labov (1963, 1966), expanded to encompass second language acquisition in the 1970s and has since generated over four decades of investigation (see Geeslin 2015 and Linford 2016 for overviews). One of the principal contributions of this subfield has been the recognition that, like L1 speakers, L2 learners' linguistic competence varies not only according to what Corder (1981) originally identified as the *vertical continuum*—that is, the scale of progression between L1 and L2 forms, more generally termed linguistic competence (Adamson & Regan 1991)—but also along the *horizontal continuum*, which accounts for learners' sociolinguistic competence, defined by Lyster (1994) as “the ability to recognize and produce contextually appropriate language, including sensitivity to differences in variety and register” (266).

Lyster's definition of sociolinguistic competence includes both recognition and production, but debate exists regarding whether L2 speakers should adopt all levels of variation along this continuum. Particularly in the realm of classroom education, proponents of a ‘pedagogical norm’ such as Albert Valdman (1961, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2003; Auger & Valdman 1999) argue that language learners should adhere to the standard, prestige variant of their L2, as this strategy avoids the risk of prejudicial judgments and allows students to benefit from the elevated status which the standard variety affords them. Many studies (e.g. George 2013b, Ringer-Hilfinger 2012) also demonstrate that learners can be hesitant to adopt regional features of a particular language variety. On the other hand, recent years have seen increasing calls for expanding the sociolinguistic competence of learners via the instruction of a range of styles

including nonstandard and regional variants (Beaulieu 2016, Bedinghaus 2015, Bradford 2010, Cutler 2014, George 2014, Goldstein 1987, Schoonmaker-Gates 2017, Shiri 2013).¹ Moreover, substantial evidence (Adamson and Regan 1991, Geeslin et al. 2010, Linford 2016, Piller 2002, Salgado-Robles 2011) exists that the acquisition of informal language occurs as a natural part of the acculturation process, and despite the reluctance of some learners to adopt informal language variation, many learners do in fact exhibit interest in this aspect of language acquisition (Dewaele 2004b, Tarone & Swain 1995, Van Compernelle & Williams 2012).

While the adoption of horizontal language variation by second language learners has received substantial attention, very few studies have empirically examined the attitudes of L1 speakers towards the use of such language. Within these studies, findings are conflicting: some indications exist that L1 speakers are critical of L2 use of nonstandard speech (Prodromou 2007, Ruivivar & Collins 2018, Swacker 1976), while others have found more positive correlations (Beaulieu 2016, George 2013b, 2014, 2017). The purpose of the study reported in this dissertation is to address the scarcity and conflicting accounts of the existing literature by investigating the attitudes of L1 speakers toward nonstandard variation via quantitative means, specifically focusing on the reception of L2 Spanish by native speakers of Peninsular Spanish.

Although nonstandard variation manifests itself in a variety of forms including phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical variants, this research focuses on lexical variation. Apart from the comparatively small proportion of acquisitional studies investigating lexical as opposed to phonological and morphosyntactic variation, a variety of sources highlight potential benefits of nonstandard lexical variation to language learners, including L2 lexical variation's

¹ A similar debate exists in ESL/EFL instruction, with numerous works calling for increased emphasis on the variety of English spoken in outer and expanding circle countries (Andreasson 1994, Deterding 2005, Hu 2004, 2005; Kang 2015, Kennedy & Trofimovich 2008, McKenzie 2008, Murphy 2014), although many students still

perceptual salience to native speakers (Beaulieu 2016), scholarly claims about its accessibility in comparison with other domains (Cutler 1999, Moriello and Wolfram 2003, Sweetland 2002, Wolfram et al. 2004, cf. Chambers 1992), students' interest in acquiring colloquial language (Charkova 2007, Horan 2013, Mercury 1995, Mougeon & Rehner 2001, Shiri 2013, Tarone & Swain 1995, Tyne 2004), and its potential social power due to covert prestige (Trudgill 1972) in constructing in-group membership (Allan & Burrige, 2006, Dewaele & Regan 2001, Eble 2012, O'Rourke & Ramallo 2011, Shiri 2015). For these reasons, the lexical domain was chosen as a point of departure for analyzing nonstandard variation. The specific nonstandard lexical variation investigated here will be referred to as colloquial language.

II. DEFINITION OF COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE

The language chosen for investigation consisted of mildly marked and marked/vernacular colloquial lexical items. Mougeon et al. (2004) divides the sociostylistic continuum into three broad categories: vernacular, mildly marked, and formal variants. In this tripartite division, vernacular forms are defined as differing from the standard variety, characteristic of informal speech as well as speakers from lower social strata, and are both inappropriate in formal settings and typically stigmatized. Mildly marked variants are similarly informal, but do not exhibit the same degree of stigmatization, social stratification, or complete inappropriateness in formal settings. Formal variants, on the other hand, represent the linguistic standard, and are characteristic of careful speech, written language, and the upper social strata.

This dissertation will investigate mildly marked forms, as well as vernacular ones which are not so marked as to be considered exceedingly stigmatized, vulgar, or otherwise

tend to demonstrate a preference toward learning the traditional, inner circle prestige Englishes of the United States and United Kingdom (Carrie 2017, Kang 2009, Timmis 2002)

inappropriate. This language will be referred to as colloquial. Bradford (2010) explores the difficulty in producing a precise definition for the term, in that it often overlaps with terms such as slang, casual speech, euphemisms, taboo words, etc. In discussing slang, Dumas & Lighter (1978) write that the term “has rarely been defined in a way that is useful to linguists” (5). They themselves provide a system for classification by stating that an expression qualifies as slang if it meets two of four criteria; these criteria are provided here in an abridged form:

1. “Its presence will markedly lower, at least for the moment, the dignity of formal or serious speech or writing.”
2. “Its use implies the user’s special familiarity either with the referent or with that less statusful or less responsible class of people who have such special familiarity and use the term.”
3. “It is a tabooed term in ordinary discourse with persons of higher social status or greater responsibility.”
4. “It is used in place of the well-known conventional synonym.”

All of these criteria are descriptive of the speech examined in this study, with some modifications. Criterion number 2 implies intimate in-group membership, but this study does not seek to investigate the language of particular sub-cultures; more relevant is a broader definition of in-group as speakers of a particular variety of the target language. Second, criterion number 3 references the taboo nature of slang; the language investigated in this dissertation should only be considered taboo insofar as it is not appropriate in all levels of formality, but outright vulgar language will not be examined. Due to these modifications, the language investigated will be referred to as colloquial, the broader of the two terms as highlighted by Bradford (2010).

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overarching purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of L1 speakers toward L2 use of colloquial language. This direction of inquiry was operationalized by specifying the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How does the use of colloquial language correlate with ratings of linguistic proficiency?

This question seeks to investigate whether learners are seen as exhibiting increased proficiency due to having acquired specialized vocabulary. Learning colloquial in addition to standard forms represents an additional investment for language learners, particularly because colloquial language varies according to region, and this question examines whether such an investment results in L1 speakers acknowledging their linguistic achievement by evaluating them as more proficient in the language.

Research Question 2: In terms of personality judgments, do L2 speakers benefit from the same advantages and suffer the same disadvantages of colloquial language use as L1 speakers?

The positive and negative effects of nonstandard variation on personality judgments are well-documented for L1 speakers (these effects are detailed in Chapter 3; see Giles & Billings 2004 for an overview). This question examined whether these same effects apply to L2 speakers as well. It is hoped that an assessment of the relative risks and rewards will help clarify the debate on whether colloquial language is an acceptable target for L2 speakers.

Research Question 3: Do L2 speakers face different standards of acceptability in terms of what contexts permit colloquial language use?

As highlighted by Mougeon et al.'s (2004) classification of the sociostylistic continuum provided in the previous section, a defining feature of informal variants is the context in which they are considered acceptable. Learning the nuances of these contexts is a difficult challenge for L2 speakers, and this question investigates whether speakers receive any special leniency due to their L2 status, or if they are held to the same standards as L1 speakers.

Research Question 4: Do listeners perceive colloquial language use by an L2 speaker as acceptable?

This question was the most direct manifestation of the inquiry motivating the study. Regardless of any other benefits or drawbacks experienced by L2 speakers due to using colloquial language, it is deemed important to ascertain L1 speakers' overt attitudes; they could, for example, potentially condemn its use on a conscious level despite perceptions of speakers using it as more capable, or vice versa.

Research Question 5: Does the gender of the speaker play a role in any of the above issues?

The use of sociostylistic variation is known to vary according to gender. For example, men have been found to be more likely than women to use nonstandard variation for the purposes of garnering covert prestige (Adamson & Regan 1991, Trudgill 1972). The intention of this question is to control for any effects of gender which might have influenced any of the other research questions.

IV. OVERVIEW

The remainder of this dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 2 explores the literature surrounding L2 use of nonstandard variation, including theoretical grounds for engaging in sociostylistic variation, the viewpoint advocated by some authors that L1 speakers resent L2 use of nonstandard variation, the existing evidence for and against this perspective, and studies on the acquisition of variation by L2 learners. Chapter 3 discusses the experimental design used to investigate the research questions presented above, including the preparation of experimental stimuli along with their basis in corpus data, a description of the questionnaire used in the investigation, and a summary of participant demographics. Chapter 4 analyzes the data acquired from the administration of this questionnaire and assesses the results. Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation, relating the results of Chapter 4 back to the study's research questions, and discussing its limitations as well as directions for future research. Finally, the Appendices provide the task instruments and other relevant figures and tables.

Chapter 2

L2 Nonstandard Variation: Theoretical Perspectives

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores existing research relevant to this dissertation's central question of what attitudes L1 speakers hold toward L2 use of colloquial language. Established theories about the sociolinguistic benefits and potential dangers of accommodating to target language norms will be discussed, followed by the notion held in some circles that a double standard exists towards the use of nonstandard language by L2 speakers. Proponents of this double standard believe that features of language which may go unnoticed—or even be considered advantageous—when produced by L1 speakers receive negative reactions when employed by those speaking the language as an L2. Relatively little empirical evidence has been provided in the debate on this matter; what few studies address the issue directly will be explained in detail.

While research on L1 attitudes towards L2 nonstandard variation is comparatively lacking, quite a large number of studies have investigated the acquisition of that same language by second-language learners. An overview of this literature will be provided as well, both in order to showcase the relevance of this dissertation's research questions, as well as for these works' potential to offer insight on the matter. In particular, many of these studies include statements from learners themselves on why they do or do not choose to adopt nonstandard variation, further demonstrating disagreement on the appropriateness of nonstandard variation for L2 speakers. The review will conclude with a summary of the chapter's findings, as well as a justification of this dissertation's investigation.

II. KEY TERMS AND THEORIES

This section will provide an overview of some relevant theories explaining sociolinguistic variation in L2 interlanguage. While they do not directly address the use of nonstandard language, these theories provide a frame of reference for how adopting or refusing to adopt the norms of a target community could prove advantageous or disadvantageous for a learner. Throughout this section, key terms will be italicized when encountered for the first time.

1. Communication Accommodation Theory

Emerging in the 1970s from the field of social psychology originally under the name Speech Accommodation Theory (Giles 1973; Giles, Taylor, and Bourhis, 1972), Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) recognizes that communication goes beyond the simple exchange of referential information. Rather, the manner in which speakers engage in this communication also signals their stances toward one another on both an interpersonal and an intergroup level. Specifically, CAT accounts for the modifications speakers make to their language in order to linguistically *converge* or *diverge* with the speech of their interlocutor.

Convergence, or accommodation, occurs when a speaker alters features such as speech rate, pitch, or accent, to be more similar to the language of his interlocutor. According to similarity-attraction theory (Byrne 1971), higher levels of interpersonal similarity result in increased interpersonal attraction, and CAT extends this logic to linguistic convergence: whether a speaker does so consciously or unconsciously, modifying one's speech to be more similar to that of his interlocutor typically occurs with the hope that the speaker will be perceived as more likeable (Gallois et al. 2005).

Conversely, *divergence* is the practice of modifying one's speech in order to distance oneself from an interlocutor. Rather than a speaker doing so out of a desire to be less well-liked

as would follow from similarity-attraction theory, CAT explains this behavior in accordance with social-identity theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979). Social-identity theory divides identity into personal and social dimensions, arguing that the latter is defined via comparisons with ingroups—people similar to an individual due to some perceived commonality—and outgroups. CAT interprets linguistic divergence as an attempt by the speaker to reinforce his own social identity by using his speech to accentuate the differences between himself and an outgroup member.

While these interpretations of convergence and divergence form the basis of CAT, as the theory evolved, it came to include more nuanced understandings of the factors affecting the phenomena. Thakerer et al. (1982) drew attention to the potential disconnect between a speaker's intention (psychological accommodation) and his actual performance (linguistic accommodation). For example, in cases of two speakers of differing social status, both speakers might attempt to accommodate to one another, with the higher-status speaker using less standardized speech and the lower-status speaker using more standardized language. That is, by attempting to converge towards an imagined version of their interlocutor's speech, both speakers could potentially end up diverging from one another despite their intentions.

This example illustrates the importance of considering the factors that affect a speaker's accommodation rather than simply the accommodation itself. CAT therefore also incorporates elements of Attribution Theory (Heider 1958, Kelley 1973), which states that the cause of behavior affects the perception of that behavior. That is, a person exhibiting undesirable behavior will be viewed differently if that behavior results from pressures external to that person's desires than if that behavior were internally motivated (Gallois et al. 2005). Similarly, conventionally desirable behavior may be received poorly if understood to have been initiated only by external factors. This applies to linguistic accommodation in that convergence may be received positively when perceived as stemming from a speaker's intent to acculturate, but less

positively when the speaker is viewed as having been compelled to accommodate by an external force (Simard, Taylor, and Giles 1976). In a similar vein, Ball et al. (1984) posited that convergence is viewed negatively when it runs counter to expected social norms.

Even in spite of positive intentions, convergence can nevertheless elicit a negative reaction if the interlocutor views the speaker as engaging in excessive accommodation. Cavellero et al. (2016) serves as an example of a study working within a communication accommodation framework which documents this phenomenon of *overaccommodation*. In this study, caregivers addressed patients at a Singaporean eldercare facility with simplified grammar and vocabulary, repetition, and increased volume, all of which were identified by the authors as appropriate levels of accommodation designed to facilitate communication. On the other hand, the caregivers also infantilized patients through methods such as exaggerated prosody and child-like forms of address. Despite the good intentions of the caregivers, these techniques resulted in interactions which demeaned and disempowered the elderly patients, thereby provoking a negative reaction.

The present study is concerned with whether L2 use of colloquial language will be perceived positively as a form of convergence through linguistic accommodation. On the other hand, L1 speakers could potentially react negatively and interpret the use of this language as overaccommodation. While CAT provides a plausible explanation for either of these reactions, which one will be provoked cannot be determined based on theory alone.

2. Language Socialization Theory

Many of the studies referenced later in this chapter have their base in Language Socialization Theory (Ochs 1996, Schieffelin & Ochs 1986). With roots in anthropology, Language Socialization Theory (LST) goes beyond cognitivist theories of language acquisition to explore how social factors drive language learning. Originally focused on the manner in which children are socialized by their caregivers, LST has since expanded to encompass second language acquisition in adults (Zuengler & Miller 2006). As learners acquire linguistic forms, they simultaneously acquire the cultural and ideological knowledge bound to those forms (Duff & Talmy 2011). For example, in a language with T—V distinction (that is, contrasting forms based on politeness or social distance), learning to apply these forms correctly necessarily involves exposure to cultural perceptions regarding societal hierarchy.

Like CAT, LST therefore recognizes that aspects of language which communicate identity are crucial points of interest, having been used as a framework in studies investigating multilingual or language contact settings (see Garret & Baquedano-Lopez 2002 for an overview). Also like CAT, LST accounts for learners' accommodation or resistance to L2 linguistic norms as an expression of their social identity. In contrast to CAT, however, LST looks at this accommodation from a longitudinal perspective, examining how learners move towards or away from linguistic accommodation over time, rather than focusing on the choices made within a decontextualized interaction.

Diao (2017), for example, draws on LST in its analysis of three U.S.-based Mandarin speakers studying abroad in China. These students recorded their conversations with their hosts over the course of their experience abroad, and participated in interviews at the beginning and end of their stay. The study investigated their awareness and negotiation of stigmatized attitudes

toward a nonstandard dental/retroflex merger over the course of this time, finding one participant came to use the merger as a symbol of authenticated identity in the host country, whereas another altered her speech toward the standardized variant due to social pressures, and still another actively resisted similarly normative views because of the language's tie with his own identity. As interpreted by LST, these results demonstrate how learner responses to social pressures govern the language which is adopted.

LST is therefore an interpretive framework which will be useful in understanding the results of the present study. If strong bias for or against L2 use of colloquial language exists among L1 speakers, this could help affect recommendations of whether learners should adopt such language.

3. Gardner's Socio-educational Model

As part of the development of his socio-educational model (Gardner 1985), which sought to explain how learners could successfully acquire a second language despite an apparent lack of aptitude, Gardner examined learner motivations for language use. These motivations can broadly be divided into two camps: *integrative motivation*, which is the desire to use the L2 in order to join the target community socially in some capacity, and *instrumental motivation*, which describes more utilitarian-minded learners who are interested in the language due to the access it might grant them to resources such as employment provided by that community (Gardner & Lambert 1972). This instrumental motivation resembles Norton Pierce's (1995) concept of *investment*, which claims that learners invest in learning a second language in order to increase the value of their cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977), that is, knowledge or resources that will aid their social standing in society. Consequently, choices in language learning can be viewed in

terms of investments and returns, which might mean for example that a learner could be motivated to learn the language despite not desiring to integrate into the target culture.

As a point of illustration, O'Rourke and DePalma (2016) contrasts language learners who learn international languages such as English or Spanish out of economic and political motivations with the more socially-motivated learners of minority languages. Specifically examining learners of Galician, this study found that its participants were principally motivated by factors such as interest in the local culture or the desire to engage in tourism. This motivation could therefore be described as integrative rather than instrumental.

The outcome of the present study's research questions would primarily have relevance for learners pursuing the language for integrative goals, in that a positive correlation between colloquial language and evaluations of personality characteristics (Research Question 2) could demonstrate the effectiveness of the language in achieving this integration. On the other hand, increased ratings of linguistic proficiency (Research Question 1) could also represent a worthwhile investment for learners interested in primarily instrumental aims.

4. Stylization, Crossing, Styling, and Passing

At the extreme end of linguistic accommodation are *stylization*, *crossing*, *styling*, and *passing*. Each of these terms describes the different ends to which L2 speakers use stylistic features from different language varieties.

As Coupland (2001) points out, much of sociolinguistic research assumes that speakers use their own voice (what Coupland refers to as "*in propria persona*"), but *stylization* involves the temporary adoption of another group's voice ("*in altera persona*"). This act is performative in nature, with the speaker departing from conventional norms frequently for humorous ends: Coupland provides the example of a stand-up comedian adopting the voice of an Italian-

American mobster in order to lead the audience to contextualize the comedian's words within the reference frame of a group about which the audience holds certain stereotypes.

Similar to stylization is *crossing* (Rampton 2005), which also involves brief imitation of other language varieties. A key distinction, however, is that crossing is done with language varieties which are seen as particularly outside the permissible range for the speaker. Rampton chronicles the use of stylistic elements of varieties such as Creole and Asian English by British adolescents, where Creole was employed with the objective of expressing opposition to authority, while Asian English communicated ingratiating deference (Rampton 2010).

Both stylization and crossing involve the short-term departure of the speaker's established identity in order to employ stereotypes attributed to another group. *Styling*, on the other hand, represents a more long-term attempt to signal traits associated with a particular group. This can be seen, for example, in the use of characteristics of African American Language by L2 English immigrants to New York City in order to express affiliation with hip-hop culture and the rejection of mainstream identity norms (Cutler 2014). While styling uses different language varieties in order to express certain values, it nevertheless does not involve the speaker pretending to be a member of the community typically associated with that variety.

Passing, on the other hand, does seek to actively convince others that the speaker is indeed a member of a social category different from that to which he would typically be assigned. This concept can be applied to mixed-race individuals claiming a particular ethnicity (Bucholtz 1995), or, more relevant for our purposes, to second language learners attempting to pass for native speakers of the L2 (Piller 2002). According to Piller, this typically takes place in short-term encounters, particularly within service contexts, and tends to continue until the speaker is discovered to be an L2 user. Trosset (1986) also discusses how some highly proficient L2 Welsh speakers, frustrated at being treated as a novelty in a community unaccustomed to

outsiders mastering their language, use their fluency to pose as L1 speakers in order to avoid this unwanted attention.

Speakers may even make strategic use of sociolinguistic variables in order to make their performance more difficult to detect. Piller (2002) comments that nonstandard varieties are particularly attractive for this purpose, as L1 speakers who are unfamiliar with the variety on anything but a stereotypical level may be fooled by the performance. She provides the example of an L2 German speaker living in Bavaria who reports frequently being mistaken for a native speaker due to her use of Swabian dialectal features. While the inauthenticity of this performance is easily detected by the speaker's Swabian partner, listeners from other dialect areas are sufficiently unfamiliar with the variety to be convinced. Piller does warn, however, that the deceptive nature of passing carries with it some negative connotations in the popular imagination, and although reality does not always reflect this stereotype, it remains a risk which speakers should be aware of.

Piller, as well as Marx (2002), also discuss a particular subset of passers who do not seek to be mistaken as a member of the L2 culture, but simply to not have their L1 be correctly identified, a goal which, for some learners, may even be more desirable than imitating nativelike L2 production. This may be done in order to avoid identification with negative attitudes toward their L1 culture, or alternatively because being mistaken for a native excludes the speaker from the praise and curiosity which often accompanies the discovery of an L2 speaker with very high language abilities.

Although the majority of accounts on passing have been based on speaker self-reports, making it difficult to assess how effective these attempts truly are, one quantitative study by Gnevsheva (2017) found evidence that passing successfully may actually be a relatively frequent phenomenon. This study asked native-speaking listeners of English to guess the origin of 18

non-native speakers; 17 were identified as native speakers at least once, and 3 of these 17 passed successfully more often than not. In many instances, speakers were misidentified as native speakers of a different dialect than that of the judges, such as three speakers who—despite being correctly identified as non-native speakers by a majority of listeners—were misidentified as native speakers of North American English between 16%-23% of the time. Gnevsheva hypothesizes that the speakers' categorical production of non-prevocalic /r/ (a salient characteristic of North American English) may have been enough to mask other non-targetlike features for the judges, who were native speakers of New Zealand English. Gnevsheva's study lends credence to the theory that passing may not be entirely uncommon.

Of these four modes of linguistic accommodation—stylization, crossing, styling, and passing—styling is that of most interest in the present study. While stylization and crossing involve short-term departures from the speaker's primary linguistic identity, this study does not seek to examine the use of colloquial language in one-off performative acts which draw specific attention to the language, but rather as a more natural incorporation into an L2 speaker's vocabulary. Similarly, the study is interested in the language's effect when utilized by those who are still clearly L2 speakers, rather than those so advanced that they could potentially pass as natives. These considerations will guide the creation of experimental stimuli in Chapter 3.

5. Covert Prestige

A well-recognized fact of sociolinguistic variation is that not all varieties hold the same value among a language's speakers. As a result of socio-political factors, certain varieties—typically those associated with higher socioeconomic or educational positions—are considered more prestigious, with notable examples including British Received Pronunciation (“BBC English”) and Parisian French (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 2000).

Despite the prestige afforded to speakers of these varieties, non-prestige dialects nevertheless persist. One theory used to account for this incongruity is that of *covert prestige* (Trudgill 1972). Originally based in a study investigating why males use more non-prestige forms than females, Trudgill found that working-class British males had favorable attitudes toward informal, non-prestige variants, despite in many cases outwardly professing dissatisfaction with their style of speech. In fact, Trudgill concluded that this working-class speech connoted ideals of masculinity, and that speakers were willing to sacrifice the status of prestige varieties in favor of increased solidarity with their peers. Trudgill dubbed this value ascribed to non-prestige language varieties “covert prestige,” as opposed to the “overt prestige” assigned to standard varieties.

The phenomenon of prestige has been observed outside monolingual environments as well. Marlow & Giles (2008) explored the use of Hawaiian Pidgin, a minority indigenous language, in informal social interactions, despite the value participants placed on Standard English in professional or educational environments. Hedgcock & Lefkowitz (2000) also used covert prestige to explain the tendency of students in a foreign language classroom to deliberately use L1-style pronunciation instead of target-like L2 forms in order to fit in with their classmates

The correlation of L1 standard varieties with status/competence and nonstandard varieties with solidarity/social attractiveness has been corroborated through numerous studies (see, for example, Giles 1971, Hiraga 2005). These studies are traditionally carried out using a *matched guise* methodology (Lambert et al. 1960). Matched guise studies involve recording two different varieties of language produced by the same speaker, and then presenting these samples to judges for evaluation on a variety of personality characteristics. The judges are led to believe that the recordings come from two different speakers, allowing for variation in evaluations while

keeping constant speaker-specific factors such as intonation, speech rate, etc. The differences between the evaluations of the two recordings are then used to draw conclusions about attitudes towards the varieties produced in the recordings. This methodology has proven successful in a wide range of studies since its introduction in the 1960s (see Garrett 2010 for an overview). The present study will utilize this methodology in order to explore whether this covert prestige is similarly afforded to nonstandard L2 variation, or whether the benefits are restricted to L1 speakers.

6. Hypercorrection/Hypocorrection

A speaker attempting to converge with their interlocutor does not always do so successfully. Baugh (1992) outlines the three possibilities when altering one's speech to be more like another variety: the speaker may approximate their linguistic target successfully, undershoot it (i.e. not alter their speech sufficiently), or overshoot it. Overshooting one's linguistic target in cases of accommodation is a phenomenon known as *hypercorrection*. Labov (1972) provided two definitions for this phenomenon, the first being "the usual use of the term to indicate an irregular misapplication of an imperfectly learned rule, as in the hypercorrect case marking of *whom did you say is calling?*" (126). The second, related definition is that which he applied to the tendency of lower middle-class New Yorkers to increase rhotic pronunciation in formal styles; Labov theorizes that this tendency occurred out of linguistic insecurity in order to mimic prestige variants, despite the fact that lower middle-class speakers in fact produced it more often than upper middle-class ones in similar conditions. In both cases, speakers attempt to alter their speech in the direction of a prestige variant, but do so excessively, as judged either by prescriptive norms (the first definition) or group tendencies (the second).

Baugh (1992), however, established that prestige variants are not always the target of hypercorrection. He examined African American native speakers of Standard English (SE) who shifted their speech style toward that of vernacular African American English (AAE)—that is, from a standard, prestige variety to a nonstandard one holding covert prestige. In this process, the SE speaker would produce utterances replicating AAE, but unattested in previous studies (e.g. “*He steadily bes on my case!*” in lieu of the more likely “*He steady be on my case.*”). Baugh argued that hypercorrection does not solely exist along one dimension, that of overshooting one’s linguistic target. Instead, he added a second dimension of social directionality, reserving the term “hypercorrection” for overcompensation towards a more standard, prestigious variety, while calling excessive attempts to approximate nonstandard speech “hypocorrection.”

Although Labov and Baugh examined L1 speakers whose hyper- and hypocorrection was seemingly unintentional, this behavior has been observed among L2 learners, principally as a more deliberate phenomenon. Participants in Müller’s (2016) study reported deliberate attempts to hide their national identity through excessive accommodation toward their target, such as one German learner who “purposefully overemphasized” (127) her German [ʁ] in order to make it clear that she did not use the English [ɹ] pronunciation. While Müller does not define overemphasis in any technical terms, it seems clear that the participant was not merely approximating native norms, but intentionally overstepping them and thereby engaging in hypercorrection.

Piller (2002) notes this same strategy in one of her German-speaking participants as well, with one placing a seemingly deliberate overemphasis on highly stereotypical Hamburg dialectal features. Piller goes on to propose an explanation for this sort of conscious overemphasis, suggesting that for those who seek to imitate a native speaker, overperformance may actually be an intrinsic part of passing. She compares linguistic passing to the performance of drag queens,

where a strictly authentic performance is not always as effective as one which plays to the stereotypes expected by an audience. L2 speakers may therefore engage in hyper- or hypocorrection in order to assert the identity they wish to project.

Because the language investigated in this dissertation will not come from L2 users attempting to pass as native speakers, however, similar hypocorrection in the production of nonstandard forms may run the risks of overaccommodation discussed in Section II of this chapter. The present study will assess whether this is the case, and if so, what penalties the speaker may face.

7. Summary

Many theories exist explaining socio-stylistic variation. This variation can take the form of both convergence and divergence towards an individual interlocutor or language varieties in general (e.g. prestige accents). Such variation is not always intentional, felicitous to the desired variety, or effective in producing the desired outcome, but it is typically a motivated decision. Whether this decision is conscious or unconscious, exercising socio-stylistic variation allows speakers to project their stance towards a particular identity, or to aim for either positive or negative reception by their interlocutor.

It is therefore difficult to determine on exclusively theoretical grounds whether adopting nonstandard variation in an L2 results in positive or negative reception, but the principles highlighted in this section provide a framework within which to interpret the results of the present study. Communication Accommodation Theory and the theory of covert prestige in particular will potentially help explain positive reactions, but it is unknown whether L2 speakers have access to these benefits when employing colloquial language. It is also possible that the use of such language will be perceived as overaccommodation or hypercorrection due to its defiance

of listener expectations; indeed, certain authors in the literature maintain that native speaking listeners do not expect to hear that sort of language from L2 speakers, and therefore respond negatively. This viewpoint, as well as the existing evidence for and against it, will be discussed in the following section.

III. THE DOUBLE STANDARD AGAINST L2 NONSTANDARD VARIATION

The previous section explored socially-motivated theories which account for variation in an individual's language. In accordance with these theories, one might assume that controlling informal, nonstandard language—so long as it is used in the correct environment—would provide language learners with the potential for a variety of social benefits. Yet, a particular school of thought argues that L1 speakers exercise a double standard toward the speech of L2 learners as far as nonstandard language is concerned. This camp maintains that language considered completely acceptable when coming from a native speaker could prompt a negative reaction when uttered by an L2 speaker, and it is this line of reasoning which will be the subject of this section.

One of the biggest endorsers of the existence of this double standard is the author Albert Valdman, whose influential notion of *pedagogical norm* is in part based on the recommendation that, while nonstandard language is important to learn from a receptive standpoint, learners should limit their production to a more standard, formal variety. After exploring his arguments, relevant empirical studies will be discussed, with some findings validating the viewpoint that nonstandard language is judged negatively when coming from L2 speakers, while others suggest that the opposite is true, and that L2 use of nonstandard language is in fact evaluated positively.

1. The Pedagogical Norm

The notion of the pedagogical norm developed in the 1960s as the field of linguistics came to view learner errors not just as the result of carelessness on the part of the learner, but rather as a significant indication of the underlying language system which they develop (Corder 1967). Accepting that error-free, nativelike competence is not an immediately realistic goal for the majority of learners, a pedagogical norm consists of a series of intermediate targets for learners as they develop their interlanguage (Magnan & Walz 2002). Scholars have adopted this concept in relation to a variety of areas: Gass et al. (2002) compiles into one volume articles detailing the application of pedagogical norm to topics including intonation (Ramsey 2002), variant word order (Ossipov 2002, Kerr 2002), communication strategies (Jourdain and Scullen 2002), and processing instruction (VanPatten 2002).

In developing these targets for learners, the notion of the pedagogical norm has since its inception been concerned with what variety of language to teach. Summarizing the development of the pedagogical norm, Magnan and Walz (2002) traces its beginnings to a manual for French teachers, “Applied Linguistics: French – A Guide for Teachers,” (1961) in which Valdman says that since instructors must choose what variety to teach, they should instruct what most French speakers would agree is the “best” and “most correct.” Stigmatized variants should be avoided—where psycholinguistic factors (i.e. ease of acquisition) encourage the initial learning of a stigmatized form, that form should be replaced as soon as the learner is ready with a neutral variant (Valdman 1976, 1988, Auger & Valdman 1999). The pedagogical norm could even be considered progressive in that, rather than ignoring the existence of nonstandard language variants entirely, it encourages the instruction of these variants on a receptive level, calling for students to be made aware of different regional and social varieties of the target language for the purposes of recognition. Still, as far as production is concerned, it argues that students should

limit themselves to socially prestigious, formal forms and steer clear from nonstandard, colloquial varieties.

Auger & Valdman (1999) provides an illustration of this suggestion. Written in response to Salien (1998), which defended the teaching of Quebec French in the classroom, Auger & Valdman (1999) advocates beginning student exposure to Quebecois as early as secondary school. The authors of the article stress, however, that this exposure should be directed towards receptive understanding, not production. Specifically referencing French interrogative constructions, they recommend that teachers of French as a foreign language should opt for sociolinguistically neutral speech variants over more stigmatized ones, even in the case that the former are considerably rarer in native speech; that is, students should be taught to hypercorrect in the sense of Labov's second definition in Section II of this chapter, overcorrecting toward the unstigmatized variant despite its relative infrequency. In a study on French pronoun alternation, Rehner et al. (2003) offers a similar recommendation, concluding that while students would benefit from expanding their repertoire of registers, the instruction of vernacular variants should potentially be limited to a receptive capacity.

Why, however, the insistence on avoiding learner production of nonstandard language? One explanation is that of limited utility. For example, Auger (2003) comments that, for the majority of students studying French in the U.S., it would be “unrealistic and unnecessary” (80) to learn the Quebecois variety—learning geographically-restricted Quebecois French makes little sense for someone who is never planning on traveling to Quebec. According to Auger, the speech of educated, middle class Parisians is a more practical target. Another defense of limiting learner production is the risk associated with utilizing nonstandard language outside of the correct environment. Among the factors Saville-Troike (2003) gives in recommending the instruction of relatively formal language varieties at beginning and intermediate levels is the

immense difficulty L2 speakers face in correctly identifying the social meaning or appropriateness of second language variation. A final justification given for avoiding production is the notion that L1 speakers react negatively to the use of nonstandard language by L2 speakers. Although Auger & Valdman (1999) states that students who have particular integrative or instrumental motivations (as seen above, Section II.3) may benefit from learning Quebec French from a productive standpoint, the authors warn that L1 speakers hold certain prejudices against L2 speakers who adopt nonstandard regional language.

This final explanation of native speaker attitudes constitutes one of the fundamental tenets of Valdman's pedagogical norm. Magnan and Walz (2002) identifies Valdman's (1988) articulation of the principles of the pedagogical norm as the one which is most frequently cited. In it, he states four principles which should guide the creation of the norm. Two of these, the second and third points, are relevant to our interests and are as follows:

“Second, they [pedagogical norms] should conform to native speakers' idealized perception of their own linguistic behavior. Third, they should define a target deemed appropriate for educated foreigners” (230).

This raises the question of just what is meant by “appropriate for educated foreigners.” Later in the same article, Valdman elaborates:

From casual observations and anecdotal reports it appears that TL speakers expect those who have learned their language in a classroom environment to speak ‘better’ than they do, that is to say, to evidence control of that range of the TL community repertoire characteristic of formal usage and written texts. They generally ascribe low social status to foreigners who evidence what they consider to be grammatical errors or devalorized phonological features and lexical choices. (p. 226)

As discussed in Section II.5, the potential for nonstandard regional and social variants to lead to more positive evaluations of speakers' personalities due to covert prestige is well-established in the outstanding literature. Valdman, however, posits that these potential benefits

of in-group membership are overshadowed by the more highly salient out-group marker of foreign accent.

Valdman's warnings about native speaker preferences recur throughout his writings on the pedagogical norm: In an article written over a decade later, Auger & Valdman (1999) reiterates these claims of native speaker expectations:

Naive native speakers do not expect foreign learners to speak as they do; they expect them to speak "better." That is to say, they do not view favorably the use by foreigners of colloquial speech forms and marked regional or social accents, especially by those who have acquired the language through formal instruction. Indeed, it seems that native speakers resent, as a form of intrusion, the appropriation of these forms by foreigners, particularly because they themselves may consider colloquial forms as incorrect or slipshod. In addition, in terms of Bourdieu's (1982) notion of the linguistic market, foreign learners who have invested considerable effort, time, and often money in learning a foreign language would expect a fair return on this linguistic capital in the form of mastery of the most socially prestigious variety of the target language. (p. 409)

In Valdman (2000), he again comments that the non-native use of informal features such as *ne*-dropping in French would be shocking ("*choquerait*", 657) given the expectation that L2 speakers use a more formal register, it being the modality with the highest linguistic value among the target group. Valdman (2003) states that native speakers may respond unfavorably to localized vernacular norms of speech, with listeners viewing foreigners who produce such forms with suspicion and as having "violated rules of hospitality" (58).

Valdman is not alone in making this assertion. In Christophersen's (1973) warnings about the dangers of "over-perfection" (89), he claimed that foreign learners who too closely mimic nativelike speech patterns are seen as furtively attempting to camouflage themselves as native speakers, leading to a perception of being untrustworthy. Thomas (1983) says "the foreign learner is usually expected to be 'hypercorrect', both grammatically and pragmatically" (96). Andreasson (1994) states that "a subtle double standard applies to the learner, who will be considered 'deficient' as far as acquisition is concerned when he or she imitates certain linguistic

elements that nobody regards as deficiencies in the speech of native speakers” (396). She elaborates that the “general attitude towards foreign language learners is that they are supposed to learn to speak the ‘right’ way” (396).

In sum, Valdman, along with other authors, proposes that there is a sort of double standard for L2 speakers as far as informal, nonstandard features are concerned: what may be considered perfectly acceptable in L1 speakers (or even received positively, as per the discussion of covert prestige in Section II.5) is paradoxically perceived negatively in foreigners. Therefore, L2 speakers are expected to hypercorrect by producing more formal language than L1 speakers would in the same situation.

2. Evidence in Favor of the Existence of a Double Standard

While the above claims are typically assertions made within the context of a larger theoretical work, some evidence does indicate that such a double standard does in fact exist. This section will first provide some of the anecdotal claims attesting to its existence, before moving on to more empirically-based studies.

Like the authors listed in the previous section, Saville-Troike (2003) recommends adhering to formal varieties in consideration of “the attitude of the target speech community, including what communicative behavior its members believe is appropriate for a nonnative speaker of the language” (9). She goes on to affirm the existence of a double standard by asserting that “native communicative norms do not generally apply” (9). Saville-Troike illustrates this point with a personal anecdote, recalling a Japanese student who used the phrase “and all that crap” instead of “etc.” in an otherwise academic essay. Due to the writer being a foreign student, she interpreted the mistake as humorous, although she makes explicit that her reaction would have been markedly different had the same words come from a native speaker. Curiously,

this anecdote indicates more leniency towards L2 speakers than L1 speakers, but it does demonstrate how a sociolinguistic variable can be interpreted differently depending on the speaker.

In a minority language context, one of O'Rourke & Ramallo's (2013) participants complains that she, as an L2 speaker of Galician, receives criticism from native speakers for using certain Spanish-influenced words instead of the standardized Galician equivalent, despite the fact that native speakers themselves do not typically make use of the standardized version of the word. These speakers believe that correctness in Galician is viewed more as a result of ethnic origin than linguistic capability.²

Piller (2002) extends the notion of this double standard to linguistic creativity in two separate anecdotes of L2 speakers of German who were interviewed for her study. In one, a non-native speaker punctuates a play on words with laughter so that the pun will not be taken as a mistake. In another, an L2 speaker's deliberate joke is misinterpreted and corrected by native listeners as an unwitting error. Piller uses these instances to illustrate how language produced by L2 speakers can receive negative attention, despite the fact that this same language would likely not be critiqued if used by another native speaker. Piller concludes that "L2 speakers may thus find themselves in a double-bind situation: language creativity, which they value highly as an expression of high achievement, may be evaluated as errors, and thus a measure of low achievement" (198).

Other authors have written about restrictions on linguistic creativity placed on L2 speakers as well. Irujo (1986) writes that "highly colloquial...colorful idioms, even when

² The difficulties of new speakers entering linguistic communities of minority languages, particularly the conflicts between a standardized yet artificial norm and an authentic yet stigmatized vernacular has been documented in Basque (Ortega et al. 2015), Breton (Hornsby 2008), Catalan (Pujolar & Puigdevall 2015), Gaelic (McEwan-Fujita 2010), Galician (O'Rourke & DePalma 2016), and Welsh (Trosset 1986).

correctly produced, often sound strange and unnatural when spoken by nonnative speakers of English” (298-299). Prodromou (2007) provides several examples from a small corpus of spoken discourse demonstrating instances where creative or humorous usage of idioms by L2 speakers is perceived as an error, despite similarities to language produced by L1 speakers. Prodromou writes, “What is considered creative in the mouth of the L1-user is often seen as a deviation in the mouth of even the most advanced successful bilingual user of the language” (21). In order to substantiate this assertion, Prodromou carried out a short survey asking 400 participants to evaluate an unusual collocation of the phrasal verb *bump into*. Typically, according to Prodromou’s corpus-based findings, *bump into* does not collocate with abstract nouns, but his survey elicited acceptability judgments on a sentence originally produced by an L2 speaker containing “bump into a new expression.” Those participants who had been told that the sentence was produced by a native speaker overwhelmingly rated the collocation as acceptable, while responses were much more mixed when the speaker was identified as a non-native speaker. One participant deftly summed up this double standard in a written comment: “I must admit I’d be happier with this from a NS than a NNS!” (22). According to this survey and his corpus-based examples, Prodromou therefore argues that L2 speakers do not have the same freedom when it comes to linguistic creativity as L1 speakers.

More recently, Ruivivar & Collins (2018) reached a similar conclusion. In a study designed to examine the impact of foreign accentedness on the acceptability of nonstandard grammatical constructions in English, eight raters heard stimuli containing subject ellipsis, historical present, topic fronting, and disjointed descriptions. All of these characteristics are characteristic of spoken English grammar. The study found that the more strongly-accented the speaker, the less grammatical raters found the constructions, thereby indicating that L1 users are extended more leniency in breaking linguistic norms, while L2 speakers are judged negatively for

the same behavior. The authors conclude that “It would appear that L2 speakers’ use of these forms does not signal group membership; rather, L1 speakers appear to perceive it as a deviation from what the speaker is expected or able to say” (196).

Ruivivar & Collins (2018) constitutes one of the few existing studies investigating the issue from a quantitative standpoint. Indeed, as seen above in Section III.1 of this chapter, Valdman (1988) makes his argument for the pedagogical norm based on “casual observations and anecdotal reports,” explicitly acknowledging the lack of “sociopsychologically oriented studies of native-speaker attitudes...of language variation and the definition of sociolinguistically acceptable learner norms for the ‘TL’” (226). Over a decade later, Valdman (2003) again highlights the absence of research in this area.

His 1988 article does, however, cite one empirically-based article in support of his argument: Swacker (1976) asked Texas (L1: English) residents to evaluate the speech of two L1 speakers of American English and two L1 speakers of Arabic who had immigrated to the United States from Jordan. Although the investigation is somewhat dated by its omission of the finer details of the experimental design and analysis, it nevertheless provides a valuable example of how the matter of double standards toward L2 speakers has been investigated.

The experiment followed a verbal guise design, which is similar in nature to a matched guise study (see Section II.5 of this chapter), but employs different speakers with similar profiles rather than a single one to produce the guises, trading inter-guise consistency for more felicitously-reproduced language varieties (see Berna et al. 2017, Carrie 2017, Ladegaard & Sachdev 2006, and McKenzie 2008 for more recent studies utilizing the technique). Four speakers prepared speech samples of uniform content, with one speaker from each group using a neutral variant of American English lacking any pronounced regional or class markers (although the L2 speaker was easily identified as a foreigner), while the other employed

numerous Texas regional markers. The specifics of these regional markers are unspecified for the L2 speaker, but the L1 speaker had “strong east-Texas pronunciation and employed such regional markers as multiple modals, ‘ya’ll’, and absence of adjectival morphemes.”

All four speakers were evaluated on a variety of personality traits. The two L1 speakers received essentially similar ratings, although the one using regionalisms was rated slightly higher on trustworthiness and slightly lower on leadership. These results could be considered analogous to the increased solidarity and decreased status effects of covert prestige in experimental settings (Section II.5). In terms of the foreign speakers, however, Swacker reports that the sample employing regionalisms received considerably more negative evaluations than the neutral variant, although the exact details of the numerical data are omitted. The speaker using regionalisms was evaluated as untrustworthy, poorly informed, and having little education or sense of humor.

From this, Swacker concludes that L2 speakers must beware of the double standard applied to L2 speakers: “Certain dialectal markers may be perfectly acceptable even advantageous when coming from a native speaker but be quite offensive when spoken by a foreigner” (3). She argues that foreign speech which too closely approximates that of L1 speakers causes discomfort and the rejection of the very regional markers the listener uses in his own speech. This, Swacker continues, leaves learners with the paradoxical goal of seeking native competence while being careful to not reproduce their target too faithfully. Similarly, teachers must teach cultural and dialectal tolerance without their students adopting forms which will prove disadvantageous in native speaker interactions. In order to overcome these dilemmas, Swacker encourages instructors to make explicit to their students that they do not have same freedom to access this language as L1 speakers. They should also be exposed to exercises asking them to identify and paraphrase nonstandard language, as well as encouraged to discuss its use in

popular media and everyday life. In short, students should be taught nonstandard language for receptive and not productive purposes, a sentiment we saw repeatedly in Section III.1.

As we have seen in this section, there exists a relatively widespread attitude that L1 and L2 speakers are not entitled to use the same language, particularly in terms of colloquial or informal variants. For the most part, the authors expressing these views do so without citing evidence for their claims, although some empirical support does exist in their favor. Prodromou (2007), Ruivivar & Collins (2018), and Swacker (1976) offer perhaps the most convincing proof in that their studies provide quantitative evidence of the phenomenon. Even so, several studies have also shown the L2 use of nonstandard variants to be received favorably by L1 speakers. These will be dealt with in the following section.

3. Evidence Against the Existence of a Double Standard

Investigations specifically tailored toward eliciting L1 attitudes with respect to L2 nonstandard variation are few and far between. The previous section described several whose results support the viewpoint that a double standard negatively affects perceptions of non-native speakers who employ this variation; this section will detail those existing studies—also few in number—which reach the opposite conclusion.

A series of works by Angela George comprise perhaps some of the best evidence on the issue. Two studies (2013b, 2014), both seemingly using the same data, found results opposite to those of Swacker (1976), Prodromou (2007), and Ruivivar & Collins (2018). While the primary focus of both of these studies is the longitudinal acquisition of phonological (as well as morphosyntactic, in the case of George 2013b) North-Central Castilian Spanish dialectal variants in study abroad students, they do include a small survey section wherein L1 speakers rated samples of the students' speech according to foreign-accentedness. George's dissertation (2013b)

describes the experiment in more detail than its published reproduction (2014), and it is this information which will be reported here: five L1 speakers of Peninsular Spanish evaluated a passage read by 25 L2 Spanish speakers studying abroad in Toledo, 9 learners who had never studied abroad, and 13 participants who studied abroad in four different South American countries. The passage was designed to elicit local phonological variants (the interdental fricative [θ], and the uvular fricative [χ]).

The study found that using these variants in at least 10% of possible environments correlated in a statistically significant manner to lower foreign accent ratings; that is, the more students employed the variants, the less foreign-sounding their accent. Curiously, the learners who had never studied abroad were evaluated as having less foreign-sounding accents than the group which studied in Toledo but exhibited less than 10% of the targeted variables. This is unexpected, as study abroad has in several studies been linked to improved foreign accent ratings (Martinsen et al. 2014, Muñoz & Llanes 2014, Llanes 2016). Although George does not hazard an explanation for this irregularity, she does record that several participants who did not adopt these local norms did so out of active resistance rather than ignorance. It is therefore possible that these participants were purposefully diverging from the target culture, resulting in speech which approximated local norms less than if they hadn't studied abroad at all.

Another interesting finding was that the L1 speakers also assigned more positive ratings to students who had studied abroad in South American countries than to those who had studied in Spain, including those who produced the variants under investigation with higher frequency (although the difference proved significant only with the low-frequency group). The implications of this finding are left unexplored, but in a separate task asking raters to identify dialectal characteristics of the speaker, judgments of this group frequently included comments on factors such as intonation or the Argentine voiceless postalveolar fricative [j̞]. This suggests that

adopting specific features characteristic of a regional variant might provide benefits even outside the region in question. Perhaps the raters, native to Spain and therefore less familiar with the Latin American dialect than the Spanish one, were likewise less able to determine whether the learner had properly approximated their target. This would corroborate the suggestion in Gnevsheva (2017) that including one or two recognizable characteristics from an otherwise unfamiliar dialect may be sufficient to convince the listener of the speaker's proficiency.

George (2017) provides an investigation more expressly focused on perceptions of L2 learners, exploring how both speaker and listener characteristics influence foreign accent ratings of L2 Spanish speakers. Among the variables investigated is the L2 production of regional features, an area which George herself highlights as having been largely unexplored in the literature. The study restricts itself to phonological variants (including [θ], [χ], [ʃ / ʒ], and /s/-weakening), leaving aside the effect of morphosyntactic or lexical choices.

In a similar experimental design to her earlier (2013b, 2014) work, George recorded participants reading two paragraphs in Spanish, from which were extracted two sentences with multiple environments conducive to the production of regional features of different varieties of Spanish. Thirty-nine of the 61³ participants had recently studied abroad in a Spanish-speaking country (27 in Spain, 12 combined in Ecuador, Venezuela, Argentina, and Chile). Ten never studied abroad, while 12 were L1 speakers from the five study abroad destinations. All study abroad participants were L1 speakers of English, except for two heritage speakers of Spanish who grew up in the US. The speech samples produced by these participants were evaluated by eight educated L1 speakers from Spain who served as judges.

³ George lists the number of participants as 63, but summing the participant data provided in Table 1 of the article yields two fewer study abroad students (39) than the stated 41. I have presented here the numbers derived from the table, on the assumption that those in George's text are the result of an error.

Of the four speaker characteristics under investigation—motivation to speak a target dialect, proficiency level, Spanish-speaking social networks, and the production of regional features—the last most significantly affected foreign accent ratings: producing regional phonological features resulted in less foreign-sounding accents than speakers who did not produce any. The use of these features was explicitly highlighted by judges as affecting their assigned foreign accent rating, although they frequently misidentified the speaker’s target dialect.

George does not analyze the effect of regional features according to those from Spain (the judges’ country of origin) and those from Latin America, but she does explore the impact of study abroad location on foreign accent ratings without taking regional features into account. Like her earlier (2013b) study, this evaluation again demonstrates a preference for L2 speakers who studied abroad in Latin America. These participants received significantly lower foreign accent ratings than students who had studied abroad in Spain, despite the reverse being true for evaluations of the L1 speakers from both regions (George does not state whether this number reaches significance). There again exists the possibility that utilizing external regional variants in fact makes one’s accent sound less foreign than a commensurate level of variation in a local dialect.

An alternative explanation, however, is that fewer participants from the Spain group used regional features. While 16 out of 27 participants (59%) claimed that they were trying to sound like Castilian Spanish speakers, only 8 out of 27 participants actually produced the features in question.⁴ In contrast, 7 out of 8⁵ participants (88%) who had studied abroad in Latin

⁴ George initially presents these numbers as follows: “Of the Spain study abroad participants who produced regional features, 86% (6/7) were aiming for a target dialect of Castilian Spanish. On the other hand, only half (9/18) of those participants who studied abroad in Spain and spoke with no regional features tried to sound like Castilian Spanish speakers. Regarding the two heritage speakers, the one who tried to sound Castilian received lower foreign accent ratings than the one who did not try to sound Castilian” (142). Although the two heritage speakers studied abroad in Spain and one produced regional features, it was assumed that they were not

America expressed intent to replicate their target dialect, and the eighth regularly used Spanish with her Spanish-speaking husband, which George says may have resulted in dialect accommodation. While George does not report the number of participants in the Latin America group who used regional variants, it seems clear that a much higher proportion was seeking to accommodate than the Spain group. This information, combined with George's finding that the production of regional features resulted in significantly lower ratings of foreign accent, suggests that the Latin America group simply had more speakers concerned with accommodating to target norms. Therefore, while the study does indicate that regional phonological variation is positively received, it is difficult to make any assumptions regarding the relative benefits of local vs. external variants.

George concludes her study by calling for increased instruction of phonological dialectal features in order to help learners sound less foreign. Furthermore, she offers several directions for future studies. These include enlisting more judges beyond the 8 she employed, as well as isolating regional features in the experimental design, since many of her listeners listed elements of vertical variation (Corder 1981) rather than regionally-based horizontal variation as influencing their decisions. As will be seen in Chapter 3, these principles were accounted for in the design of the present study.

Apart from the works by George, Beaulieu (2016) offers perhaps the clearest evidence in support of L2 nonstandard variation. This study investigated the attitudes of French-speaking nursing patients in Alberta, Canada toward stylistic variation of nurses who spoke French as an L2. The intent of the study was to decide whether these nurses should employ the target

included in the 6/7 and 9/18 tallies, as the total number of participants studying abroad in Spain is given elsewhere as 27.

community's informal stylistic norm or the pedagogical norm of commercial textbooks for L2 nursing students, which exclusively promoted the use of formal features in nurse-patient interactions. The investigation followed a matched guise format, comparing mildly-marked informal variants typically used by French L1 nurses in western Canada to the formal variants recommended by the pedagogical norm. These variants consisted of phonological (e.g. /l/ deletion vs. retention), grammatical (*on/nous* alternation), and lexical items (*edessous de bras* vs. *aisselles* 'armpit'). The same speaker recorded both audio samples, which took the form of nurse-patient interactions, while distractor speech samples minimized the chances of listeners identifying the speaker of the experimental items.

The participants consisted of 42 elderly patients, all of whom identified as L1 speakers of French. After listening to each of the recordings, a semi-directed interview elicited participant attitudes towards the nurse and their use of the target features. As judged by these interviews, the formal guise based in the pedagogical norm was received negatively by over half of the participants (24/42). Patients used words such as "cold, distant, aloof, presumptuous, authoritative or uptight" to describe the speaker. While the phonological and grammatical variants received no mention unless prompted by the researcher, participants drew considerable attention to the formal lexical variants employed in the guise, which they interpreted as reflecting a lack of social skills. On the other hand, 7 of the 42 participants responded positively to the language used in the formal variant. As in the negative comments, participants drew explicit attention to the lexical variants used in the sample, describing the language as more professional. Beaulieu comments that these 7 participants came from language backgrounds which valued

⁵ Although the Latin American group was comprised of 12 participants, 4 from Ecuador were excluded from analysis due to that variety not typically producing the regional features under investigation.

prescriptive norms more highly, which could potentially explain their positive reaction in comparison with the informal guise

In contrast to the formal guise, the informal sample received overwhelmingly positive reactions (35/42 participants). Praise centered around social qualities linked to positive bedside manner, attributing to the nurse characteristics such as “warmth, kindness, adaptability and trustworthiness.” Participants again reacted most strongly to the lexical variants, with the phonological and grammatical variants going largely unnoticed. Some patients even praised the informal guise for the professionalism which other participants had seen in the formal sample. For these listeners, professionalism entailed the flexibility to adapt to patients by using informal words. While the majority of participants responded positively, 7 of the 42 found the nurse’s accommodation to the local norm “patronising, condescending, and highly unprofessional.” Beaulieu posits that this attitude was due to growing up in a French-majority setting (Quebec or France), where value ascribed to the prescriptive norm precludes appreciation for the informal variants in a professional setting.

The reverse was true of participants educated in Western Canada, who ascribed low social attractiveness to the formal variants, potentially due to less-prescriptive views of the language. This indicates the vital role played by social norms in the perception of nonstandard features, and the necessity of selecting the correct register according to one’s environment. Beaulieu therefore argues that a successful learner must control both formal and informal varieties:

L2 users must then develop a broad stylistic repertoire—consisting of both local practices and standard prescriptive usage—in order to successfully anticipate and satisfy target community members’ sociolinguistic expectations. Adopting either the traditional prescriptive norm, which presents the language as a decontextualised and ‘depragmatized’ system (Milroy and Milroy 1991), or the local native speaker norm as the sole model for L2 instruction would not enable students to acquire the range of stylistic features they need in order to carry out meaningful interactions in real-life contexts. (p. 283)

In light of the saliency of lexical variants to her participants, Beaulieu suggests that controlling mildly-marked informal lexical variants would be the most cost-effective method of accomplishing this goal. This stands in stark contrast to the attitudes seen in Section III.1 of this chapter advocating for the limitation of nonstandard language learning to exclusively receptive purposes.

4. Summary

While the results of Beaulieu's (2016) study stand in favor of L2 control of nonstandard variation, the dichotomy of her subjects' opinions in many ways represent a microcosm of the views we have seen throughout this section. Proponents of Valdman's pedagogical norm, some anecdotal accounts, and several quantitative studies indicate that a double standard exists with regard to the use of nonstandard language by non-native speakers. On the other hand, other empirically-based studies have also shown the opposite to be true, with regional or informal variants in fact improving evaluations of L2 speakers.

In light of these mixed results, it seems apparent that additional investigation is required. Before detailing the present study's contributions to the matter, however, it is worth taking some time to conduct a brief overview of one other area of the literature. While the research on attitudes toward L2 use of nonstandard variation is relatively scarce, a substantial amount has been written on the degree to which L2 learners acquire this variation. This research is discussed in the following section.

IV. L2 ACQUISITION OF NONSTANDARD VARIATION

1. Studies Investigating L2 Adoption of Nonstandard Variation

The present section seeks to showcase the wide array of studies which have investigated the degree to which L2 speakers adopt nonstandard variation. Substantial research has been conducted on the acquisition of phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical varieties. The enduring interest in this topic itself constitutes an implicit endorsement of the importance authors place on the acquisition of these variables; indeed, many works explored here have called for expanding the sociolinguistic competence of learners via the instruction of a range of styles including nonstandard and regional variants. While a full exploration of the factors affecting the acquisition of this variation is not necessary for the present study's purposes, the breadth of this work is nevertheless important for contextualizing debate on the topic. Therefore, this section will provide a brief overview of the relevant literature without attempting to exhaustively catalogue every work on the matter.

The studies presented in this section demonstrate that prestige variants are not always the target for learners. Goldstein (1987), Adamson & Regan (1991), and Friesner & Dinkin (2006) all investigated immigrant communities in the United States who adopted nonstandard varieties as the target for their L2 English. Adamson & Regan (1991), for example, found that a nonprestige phonological variant was specifically targeted by participants, even though the prestige form was supplied by their native language phonology and therefore would presumably be the easiest form for them to acquire and produce. Friesner & Dinkin (2006) demonstrated that learners are also sensitive to the stigmatization that can accompany such forms, acquiring some regional phonological features while avoiding more stigmatized ones despite their relative ease of acquisition.

Research in the area of nonstandard variation has typically centered on Western languages, with a large number of works investigating French and, more recently, Spanish. In French, studies have examined *ne* deletion (Dewaele 2004b, Regan 1996), *nous/on* alternation (Dewaele 2002, Lemee 2002, Rehner et al. 2003, van Compernelle and Williams 2009), subject-doubling (Nagy et al. 2003), /l/ deletion (Howard 2006, Howard et al. 2006), and Future Temporal Reference (Blondeau et al 2014).

In Spanish, the acquisition of the interdental fricative [θ] by study abroad students has inspired multiple studies (George 2013a, 2014, Knouse 2013, Ringer-Hilfinger 2012). This regional variant is employed throughout much of Spain, but not in Latin and South-American varieties, and in contrast to findings on other phonological variants cited above, American learners have been found to be reluctant to employ this particular form of variation. George (2013a, 2014) and Ringer-Hilfinger (2012) attribute this low level of production to the pressures learners experience from non-Peninsular Spanish social networks both while abroad and when returning to the United States, while Knouse (2013) suggests that although the realization of [θ] may offer increased social or cultural acceptance in the local community, this nativelike pronunciation does not necessarily provide immediate rewards in terms of improved communicative outcomes.

Learner reluctance to acquire nonstandard variation in Spanish is principally limited to these studies of the Peninsular [θ]. Research on morphological features such as the geographically-restricted subject pronoun *vosotros* (George 2013b, Reynolds-Case 2013) and variable direct object pronouns (Geeslin et al. 2010, Linford 2016, Salgado-Robles 2011, 2014) have found that L2 speakers in a study abroad environment slowly move toward regionally-appropriate use as they integrate with the community.

Finally, although not as common as the research on phonological and morphological variation presented above, some works have investigated the acquisition of lexical variation as well. Bradford (2010), Charkova (2007), Dewaele (2004a), Dewaele & Regan (2001), Mougeon & Rehner (2001), and Xu & McAlpine (2008) have all explored the issue in relation to English and French through varying means, and results have been mixed. Bradford (2010), for example, found that L2 learners of English in El Paso, Texas displayed receptive competence with regard to colloquial language, while Xu & McAlpine (2008) found that their participants' knowledge of informal Canadianisms was limited.

Again, the above studies are primarily applicable to this dissertation insofar as they demonstrate the breadth of research on L2 acquisition of nonstandard variation, and less so in terms of their specific methods and findings. Even so, some relevant trends which have emerged from this research will briefly be highlighted.

One of these trends is the use of nonstandard language for the purposes of linguistic accommodation and covert prestige. In several works, the authors hypothesize that study participants have adopted nonstandard language in order to gain certain social benefits. Adamson & Regan (1991) provided this explanation after male participants used non-prestige variants even in monitored settings, while Regan (1996) postulates that *ne* deletion occurred in the L2 French of participants in order to wield the “symbolic power” of vernacular grammar. Also with regard to *ne* deletion, Dewaele (2004b) stated that this variant, as a mildly-marked one which is relatively undemanding on a cognitive level, represents an easy way for non-native speakers to accommodate to native speakers at no great risk to themselves. Regan et al. (2009) echoes this supposition, concluding that *ne* deletion occurs as a result of linguistic accommodation to the target community. In regard to overuse of Peninsular Spanish direct object pronoun variation, Linford (2016) proposes that learners may be attempting to adopt a

Peninsular Spanish identity, and that using the regional variant wrongly or rightly in as many different contexts as possible is an effort to assert that identity (cf. the discussion of hypercorrection in Section II.6). The authorial conjecture presented in these studies is unsubstantiated by empirical evidence, but its repeated occurrence suggests that the present study may find evidence of covert prestige due to colloquial language.

While Linford (2016) is not the only study cited above which documents learner overuse of informal variation (cf. Dewaele 2002, Lemee 2002), the opposite trend can be observed throughout the above studies as well, with formal, standard variants being overused by L2 learners in general (Howard 2006, Mougeon & Rehner 2001) and females in particular (Adamson & Regan 1991, Mougeon et al. 2010, Regan et al. 2009). Dewaele & Regan (2001) accounts for the rarity of colloquial words in the vocabulary of lower-level learners by arguing that incomplete knowledge entails the risk of pragmatic failure as a result of using colloquial words incorrectly; this gap in their sociopragmatic skills can manifest itself either in the form of unconscious errors or conscious avoidance of language which would put the deficiencies of their sociopragmatic competence on display. Dewaele (2004a) comments that this lack of competence “may have convinced them to stay clear of words carrying the label ‘vernacular’ in their mental lexicon” (146). Van Compernelle & Williams (2009) faults the meager or non-existent explanations of socio-stylistic values of linguistic variants in textbooks; they theorize that more advanced students eventually overcome this deficit due to increased exposure to authentic discourse in the target language, but nevertheless call for increased classroom attention to informal variants from early in the L2 learners’ career in order to avoid leaving such a major gap in their sociolinguistic competence.

This call for increased emphasis within language curricula is endorsed by numerous authors (Charkova 2007, George 2014, Howard 2006, Nagy et al. 2003). Mougeon & Rehner

(2001) hypothesizes that students will be perceived as “distant and uncooperative” (412) without amplifying their linguistic repertoire, and therefore call for explicit instruction in the learning of socio-stylistic variants in order to afford students the opportunity to incorporate more informal and vernacular variants in their interlanguage.

Although positive correlations have been found between the acquisition of language variation and study abroad (Geeslin et al. 2010, Howard et al. 2006, Knouse 2013, Raish 2015, Regan 1996, Shiri 2013, 2015) as well as successful integration and contact with L1 speakers (Blondeau et al 2014, Dewaele 2002, Dewaele & Regan 2001, George 2013b, Linford 2016, Rehner et al. 2003, Reynolds-Case 2013, Nagy et al. 2003), conflicting evidence exists as to whether or not classroom instruction itself actually helps students acquire this language. Dewaele (2002) and Dewaele & Regan (2001) observed that formal instruction did not result in increased learner acquisition of the target variation, whereas Rehner et al. (2003) and French & Beaulieu (2016) found evidence to the contrary, with the latter demonstrating that students did struggle to produce the informal variants in spontaneous speech, but that their use approached L1 norms when given time to plan their production. This suggests that explicit instruction could in fact be valuable, but that its effects are mediated by the increased cognitive demands on language processing necessitated by spontaneous speech in informal contexts.

These conflicting views are mirrored in Xu & McAlpine’s (2008) investigation of knowledge of colloquialisms of L2 speakers in Canada. As part of this study, Canadian ESL teachers were polled regarding their attitudes toward teaching Canadianisms in the classroom. Opinions were sharply divided, with half of the teachers reporting that they made an explicit point of teaching Canadianisms in their classroom, while the other were opposed to the idea. These split responses suggest that the divided attitudes toward the instruction of regional

variants is as controversial among language teachers as it is among the theoretical viewpoints presented in Section III of this chapter.

The studies in this section have demonstrated that learner adoption of nonstandard variants is far from infrequent. While disagreement exists regarding the relative influence of specific factors such as explicit instruction in acquiring this variation, it is clear that L2 learners do interact with this language in their linguistic development. Some aspects of variation are more commonly adopted than others, with mildly-marked features in particular having been theorized as a relatively easy, risk-free way for learners to gain cultural acceptance. Despite potential drawbacks of overgeneralizing these variants or the increased cognitive demands they entail, the adoption of nonstandard language seems to constitute an important aspect of many learners' acculturation process. The number of studies documenting learner acquisition of this language variation does suggest some level of contradiction with the warnings about double standards given in Section III—if such a double standard exists, then why do so many learners persist in adopting variation? The next section seeks to address this question by compiling relevant reports of individual learners found throughout the literature.

2. What Do L2 Learners Say About Their Experience?

As seen in the previous section, the adoption of nonstandard variation is far from a rare phenomenon among second language learners. Yet, one can observe a partisan division among learners similar to that which divides academics. Some L2 speakers resist the adoption of nativelike local norms on ideological grounds, and others are eager to expand their sociolinguistic competence out of either personal or practical motivations. Although the present study is more concerned with native speaker attitudes towards L2 variation than those of L2

speakers themselves, the varying explanations given by learners for their choices throughout this section will help provide further insight into the effects of adopting this variation.

2.1 Examples of Learners Reluctant to Use Nonstandard Variants

Many learners choose to diverge (Section II.1) from linguistic tendencies of a language community by avoiding features they consider to be nonstandard. Justifications for this divergence can generally be divided into several camps: they do so in order to accentuate their foreignness or preserve their own identity, because they find the variation in question inappropriate outside the target community, they hold a negative attitude towards the variety, or they have insecurities about their ability to correctly implement the relevant features. Examples of learners professing each of these motivations are given below.

2.1.1. In Order to Accentuate Foreignness/Preserve Their Own Identity (The “Charles Boyer Phenomenon”)

In exploring the role of ethnic group affiliation in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation accuracy, Gatbonton et al. (2005) characterizes L2 learners as facing a conflict in identity between their L1 home group and potential membership in the new, L2 group. Improperly navigating this crossroads may lead to the home group characterizing the learner as having betrayed them, while the L2 group may conversely spurn attempts to join them. In order to avert questions of loyalty from both sides, some learners seek a lower level of mastery of the L2 by, for example, deliberately maintaining a foreign accent. Morley (1991) sums up this conflict between identity and performance by saying “perfect L2 pronunciation is not desired by some learners who wish—consciously or unconsciously—to retain accent features to mark their L1 identity and to insure [sic] that they are not perceived as betraying their loyalty to their L1

community” (499). Bley-Vroman (1989) similarly states that some L2 speakers may eschew native-like language patterns in an attempt to exaggerate their foreignness, an attitude he dubs the “Charles-Boyer phenomenon” (presumably referencing the famed Hollywood actor who was renowned for his French accent).

George (2013b) theorizes that this preservation of identity could have been at the root of her participants’ reluctance to adopt Spanish regional features while studying abroad. George reports one participant as justifying her omission of [θ] by saying that “she would not fit in, even if she tried to sound Spanish” (132).⁶ The same sentiment was expressed by several of Ringer-Hilfinger’s (2012) study abroad participants, one of whom wrote that adopting the regional Spanish [θ] “would sound phony because I am not a native speaker anyway” (441). Another participant wrote “I am embarrassed to use it because I am obviously not a native speaker from Spain” (445), while others called it “fake” and unnatural for them to produce it. For these learners, their L1 identity is incompatible with the adoption of the full range of L2 phonological features.

Similar comments came from the least-successfully integrated group of Lybeck’s (2002) American participants living in Norway, who stated that “it felt unnatural to mimic native speech” (181), and that losing their foreign accent could result in losing their American identity. Notably, one participant successfully employed target-like Norwegian pronunciation at the beginning of the longitudinal study, but later drastically reduced her usage in favor of American pronunciation after frustrated attempts to gain acceptance in the host culture. All of these comments demonstrate a perceived incompatibility between fully native speech patterns and

⁶ It should be noted that [θ] is present in participants’ L1 English; this variant is not identified as uniquely “Spanish” due to its contrast with English phonology, but rather because of its absence in non-Peninsular varieties of Spanish.

identity as L2 speakers—an attitude quite similar to that held by proponents of the double standard discussed in Section III.

Several authors writing about L2 Japanese speakers' pragmatic competence have also questioned the notion that nativelike competence is the ultimate goal of all learners. Ishihara (2006), Ishihara & Tarone (2006), LoCastro (1998), and Siegal (1996) all provide examples of speakers who purposefully resist accommodating to Japanese norms for honorifics, gendered language, and gender-specific intonation due to an unwillingness to compromise on the values of their L1 culture. Members of the target culture showed a range of reactions to this behavior, ranging from positive support of the behavior, to neutral non-reaction, to negative, social ostracism. Despite the rejection of L1 norms by these learners, Ishihara (2006) recommends that students should nevertheless be taught L2 pragmatic norms, while the ultimate decision of whether or not to follow them can be left up to the students.

In an exploration of her own experience as a new speaker of Welsh, Trosset (1986) comments that “any ability to employ colloquial idioms or features of regional dialects is viewed as a noteworthy skill beyond simple competence” (180). Nevertheless, she discusses the paradoxical shame she experienced upon using this language correctly: “There was something embarrassing about my being able to sound like a native Welsh person...The most ‘colorful’ and colloquial turns of phrase were the ones against which I experienced the greatest resistance due to shame, even though on another level I very much wanted both to learn and to use them” (185). Trosset explains that this sense of shame resulted from two reasons: first, a combination of fear of losing her own L1 identity along with the implied challenge to L1 Welsh speakers' authority over the language. Second, she found that, since Welsh speakers are more accustomed to beginning-level learners of their language than highly competent second-language speakers, displaying these markers of high-level achievement brought her unwanted attention. In order to

avoid this attention, Trosset writes, “I would sometimes refrain from using my most idiomatic Welsh so as not to draw attention to myself, despite the fact that I (like everyone else) was delighted by my acquisition of more picturesque speech” (186).

All of these attitudes demonstrate the existence of a camp of learners who feel they either don’t have the right to the full range of L2 mastery, or that they have ideological grounds for not pursuing certain aspects of the language. The next group of learners to be discussed do not have these reservations, but feel instead that it is impractical to learn elements of language which are not suited to all geographic regions.

2.1.2. Inappropriate Outside Target Community

The learners in this category avoid target norms which may not be generalizable to other language contexts. George’s (2013a, 2013b, 2014) investigations of American students studying abroad in Spain attributed the reluctance of some participants to use Peninsular Spanish regional variables to the variety’s minority status among Spanish speakers in the US. Several of George’s (2013a) participants expressed a desire to use “general correct pronunciation” rather than a specifically Peninsular variety, indicating that they preferred practicing a variety deemed acceptable in the long term over accommodating to a local community in the short-term. Ringer-Hilfinger (2012) recorded one participant as wishing to have no regional accent whatsoever, while others attributed their non-use of the Peninsular Spanish [θ] to its absence in the Spanish of Latino friends in the United States.

Kang (2009) discovered a similar trend in her study of ESL students, highlighting the concerns of participants studying in New Zealand that adopting a native accent would be ridiculed upon return to their home country. In fact, 26 percent of students learning English in New Zealand deliberately avoided sounding like a native speaker at least occasionally, compared

to only 8 percent of students surveyed in the United States, suggesting that the relative prestige of a language variety influences the degree to which L2 speakers attempt to emulate it.

The examples in this section demonstrate that some learners reject native norms when they do not represent those of the community in which they wish to integrate. This can be considered a ‘pull’ factor steering speakers away from a particular variety; other learners experience ‘push’ factors due to linguistic stigmatization of the variety in question.

2.1.3. Negative Attitude

These learners distance themselves from a particular variety due to the negative attitudes they hold toward it. Nagy et al. (2003) found in the study’s interviews that some participants held a negative attitude toward Montreal French and/or its speakers, and the authors hypothesize that this steered them away from authentic pronunciation. Ringer-Hilfinger’s (2012) investigation of the Peninsular Spanish [θ] found a variety of negative attitudes toward the variable, which perhaps explain why so few learners acquired it in the studies mentioned in Section IV.1. One of Ringer-Hilfinger’s participants referred to the [θ] as a “lisp,” a stigmatized speech impediment in his L1 English, despite the fact that this pronunciation is the norm throughout much of Spain. Other participants in the study echoed this opinion, calling the variable “unattractive” and unappealing.

2.1.4. Linguistic Insecurity

Not all participants who did not employ the [θ] in Ringer-Hilfinger’s (2012) study did so out of negative attitudes—some simply doubted that their limited competence was sufficient to make use of it properly. These students consequently avoided producing the variable. Similarly,

one participant in French and Beaulieu (2016) stated that he preferred not to use informal variants out of concern for listener comprehension:

...it's not important for me to speak exactly like them [i.e., use of informal variants] because I have an accent when I speak French. Also, I know that people sometimes have problems understanding me, so I think it's better for me to use standard French [i.e., formal variants] so as to make it easier to be understood. (p. 67)

Kinginger & Farrell (2004) highlights that “Many learners tend to avoid using forms perceived as nonstandard or informal, even when these forms are known to the learners. The status of ‘learner’ or of ‘non-native’ language user tends to convey with it an attitude of caution when it comes to employing the full range of available second language resources” (19). Specifically examining L2 French variation between formal and informal forms of address in the second person, they found that some students deliberately avoided native-like levels of informal address in order to mitigate the risks of pragmatic failure. In fact, their most educated participant (and therefore presumably the one most familiar with the risks of utilizing the incorrect address form) was the least willing of all subjects to accommodate to native-like levels of the informal *tu*, identifying his choice of the formal *vous* as a deliberate stance.

2.1.5. Summary

Whether for reasons of identity, linguistic target, negative attitude, or a lack of confidence in their own proficiency, the above studies demonstrate that many learners choose to actively avoid the adoption of a particular L2 variety. These attitudes are significant for the present study, because additional evidence regarding the effect of nonstandard variation on native speaker attitudes could on the one hand affirm their concerns, or on the other convince them that the relative benefits of adopting this variation outweigh their apprehensions.

2.2. Examples of Learners Wanting to Use More Nonstandard Variants

While the literature demonstrates many instances of learners avoiding nativelike norms to one degree or another, other evidence exists of learners showing interest in the production of informal or regional variants. The studies listed throughout Section IV.1 demonstrate that adopting these variants is a relatively common phenomenon; this section will briefly compile some examples of motivations as provided by the learners themselves.

2.2.1. Feelings of Limitation

In some cases, interest in nonstandard language can come from a purely practical standpoint, with learners looking to shore up weaknesses in their interlanguage. Dewaele (2004c) describes the frustration language learners experience when, after years of instruction in “the orthoepic standard norm (Valdman 2003)” (302), they cannot produce vernacular speech when the situation requires it of them. Thibault & Sankoff (1993, cited in Nagy *et al.* 2003) provides the example of Anglophone students in Quebec who consider their lack of Quebecois French features as hamstringing their ability to participate in the local variety.

The desire of these learners to have a more complete linguistic repertoire in their L2 reflects the calls for increased classroom instruction of socio-stylistic variation made in Section IV.1. It also represents a chiefly instrumental motivation as detailed in Section II.3. The final studies in this section display integrative motivation, with learners believing that informal language provides them with the tools necessary to earn approval in the target culture via accommodation.

2.2.2. Desire to Acculturate

Learners with integrative motivations are interested in informal language out of aspirations to fit in with or emulate the norms of L1 speakers. Although the studies of the Peninsular Spanish [θ] in Section IV.1 showed relatively low levels of adoption in general, three of Ringer-Hilfinger's (2012) participants expressed a desire to employ this variation due to its prestige status. One of these stated that she strongly wished to sound like a native speaker from Madrid, with the goal of sounding "less American." This goal echoes those found in Piller (2002), Marx (2002), and Müller (2016), whose descriptions of attempts at passing for a native speaker were discussed in Section II.

This desire to speak like a native is often expressed in the form of dissatisfaction with the breadth of variation made available in language classes. In Tarone and Swain (1995), a student in a French immersion program comments on the absence of instruction of colloquial language in formal education: "So I'd like to be able to sit in a classroom and have someone teach me how to say, 'Well, come on guys, let's go get some burgers' and stuff like that" (172). One of Dewaele's (2004b) subjects expressed his distaste for French classes after living in France; he wanted to speak "exactly like a Frenchman" (441) but complains that in class he is forced to use a formal register. This desire to use informal language in order to gain sociocultural acceptance is also present in Van Compernelle and Williams (2012), which describes a student of French struggling to develop her sociolinguistic competence. She does this by actively reducing the amount of formal language in her everyday speech and replacing it with informal variants. These efforts stem from a desire to gain greater social acceptance in authentic French communities in the future, and align with the theories of accommodation described in Section II.

2.3. Summary and Justification for Current Study

In sum, learner attitudes more or less mirror theoretical assumptions about the effect of L2 use of nonstandard variation. Some learners, like proponents of Valdman's (1988) pedagogical norm, believe that a double standard exists with regard to this variation—certain aspects of the language are off limits to L2 speakers, and while it might be useful to understand these features on a receptive level, any learner producing them runs the risk of negative judgments by L1 speakers. Other learners hold the opposite opinion, viewing nonstandard variation either as a necessary part of their L2 competence, or as a beneficial aid in accruing covert prestige and accommodating to the target culture.

Empirical studies in this debate are surprisingly few, and their results are similarly mixed. Swacker (1976), Prodromou (2007), and Ruivivar & Collins (2018) found that nonstandard language is evaluated more negatively when coming from L1 than L2 speakers, while works by George (2013b, 2014, 2017) and Beaulieu (2016) indicated that this language may in fact offer L2 users considerable benefits. Additionally, as seen in Section IV, numerous studies have investigated whether or not learners successfully acquire L2 variation. Given the considerable research invested in exploring this acquisition and the lack of conclusive evidence about one of the fundamental reasons it takes place, it seems worthwhile to add additional information to the debate. The present study seeks to do exactly that, providing an investigation specifically dedicated to the question of how L1 speakers perceive the production of nonstandard language by L2 learners. As will be seen, the results of this investigation found that perceptions of colloquial language use by L2 speakers are neither unilaterally positive nor negative.

Chapter 3

Methodology

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter details the experimental design employed in the investigation of the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, repeated here:

Research Question 1: How does the use of colloquial language correlate with ratings of linguistic proficiency?

Research Question 2: In terms of personality judgments, do L2 speakers benefit from the same advantages and suffer the same disadvantages of colloquial language use as L1 speakers?

Research Question 3: Do L2 speakers face different standards of acceptability in terms of what contexts permit colloquial language use?

Research Question 4: Do listeners perceive colloquial language use by an L2 speaker as acceptable?

Research Question 5: Does the gender of the speaker play a role in any of the above issues?

A matched guise methodology was selected for the investigation of these questions due to its widespread application to language attitudes research (see Garrett 2010 for an overview). As described in Chapter 2, the matched guise technique involves one speaker producing several speech samples which in principle differ only according to the variable under investigation and then presenting these guises to listeners as if they had been produced by different individuals. In this way, differences in evaluations can be attributed to the experimental variable rather than factors such as the speaker's vocal qualities.

In most matched guise studies, such as those investigating attitudes toward dialectal variation (e.g. Bayard et al. 2001), this variable is phonetic in nature, with the same spoken passage being presented to listeners in two or more different accents. In the case of this dissertation, however, lexical variation was the topic of interest, meaning that a modification to this design was necessary: the voice of the speaker was held constant while the words they used changed. While not nearly as widespread as phonetic alterations, performing the matched guise technique with lexical variation is not altogether unheard of (see, for example, Cargile & Giles 1998), and therefore the methodology was considered appropriate for this dissertation. Thus, in the current study, one guise produced by the speaker included 14 colloquial words, while the other consisted of that same script with each of the words replaced by their neutral equivalents. The preparation of those scripts as well as the selection of the words for investigation are detailed in Section II.1.

Because this dissertation's research questions include not only how evaluations of L2 speech differ according to colloquial and neutral registers but also how this compares to differences between colloquial and neutral L1 speech, several guises were required. One set of guises was produced by L2 speakers of Spanish, and another set by L1 speakers. Although the matched guise technique in its most traditional form requires the same speaker to produce all guises, the verbal guise variation (e.g. Carrie 2017) allows for different speakers with similar profiles in situations where a single speaker is not capable of producing all requisite guises. Because the research questions of this dissertation include the investigation of differing attitudes according to the L1 status of the speaker, it was felt that the authenticity in performance gained by using both L1 and L2 speakers would compensate for any confounding influence introduced

by variation between individuals' voice quality.⁷ The profiles of these speakers are provided in Section II.2.

These guises were then presented to participants along with a questionnaire eliciting their evaluations. Section II.3 describes the assessment questionnaire, the validity of which was tested in a pilot study described in Section III. Section IV describes the participants who took part in the study, while Section V details the procedure of administering the questionnaire.

II. INSTRUMENTS

The matched guise experimental design used in this study required participants to evaluate several voice recordings of L1 and L2 speakers using both colloquial and neutral language. This section will discuss the creation of the scripts used to generate these audio samples followed by a profile of the speakers who performed them, before concluding with a description of the questionnaire participants used to evaluate the recordings.

1. Scripts

Several scripts were created for use in the guises which participants would evaluate. The first step in this process involved selecting the specific words which would be used in the colloquial guise. The goal was to select informal terms regionally appropriate to Peninsular Spanish, as the study would be conducted in Spain (see Section IV for additional details regarding the research site). Potential words were selected using the Peninsular Spanish section

⁷ Although different speakers were used, each speaker still produced both neutral and colloquial guises. This means that vocal qualities were held constant between guise pairs, and only differed between speakers, thereby reducing—albeit not eliminating—the variability inherent in the verbal guise tradition. This dissertation therefore utilizes a hybrid between matched and verbal guise techniques, although the methodology employed will hereafter be referred to as the matched guise technique for the sake of brevity.

of Fitch's (2011) *Diccionario de coloquialismos y términos dialectales del español*. The items in this dictionary were selected based on a variety of criteria:

Appropriateness: Both mildly marked and vernacular informal variants (Mougeon et al. 2004) were considered, while avoiding expressly stigmatized, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate language. The intention was to use language which departed from a neutral standard, but which still would be considered appropriate for an L1 speaker in most informal contexts—that is, language which in principle would strike an L2 learner as an acceptable target, and which was the subject of the majority of the research on L2 variation presented in Chapter 2. For this reason, entries relating to potentially controversial subject matters (e.g. drugs, sex, etc.) were excluded, as well as those explicitly marked as vulgar⁸ (*plantar un pino*, “to defecate”), pejorative (*gitanada*, “trick”), characteristic of children's speech (*feto*, “ugly person”), or as falling out of common use (*hacer campana*, “to be truant”).

Number of words: Words were included only in the case that the neutral equivalent provided in the dictionary could be substituted in roughly the same number of words without significant loss in meaning (e.g. *hombre*, “man” in place of *tío*, “dude”). Because the study's experimental design necessitated as much similarity as possible between the neutral and colloquial scripts, substantially increasing the number of words in the neutral variant would reduce comparability to the colloquial guise. *Pagafantas*, for example, had the following definition in the dictionary: “*Individuo (generalmente de sexo masculino) que espera inútilmente convertir su amistad con una persona del sexo opuesto en una relación sentimental o sexual.*”⁹ Even after reducing the verbosity typical of dictionary entries, this term could not be replaced with a neutral equivalent without

⁸ The classification of the dictionary took precedence, although in the case of certain words such as *hostia* (“Jesus!”) and *gilipollas* (“asshole”) which were not marked as vulgar, the Royal Spanish Academy's online dictionary (www.rae.es) was consulted as well.

drastically increasing the number of words necessary to communicate the same concept. In addition to these considerations of the study's experimental design, some words had to be excluded based on limitations of the corpus analysis in the next step. The R script used to analyze the corpus data only accommodated individual lemmas, meaning multiword phrases (*dar la lata*, “annoy”) were omitted. This necessarily entailed the omission of all adverbial phrases, noun phrases, adjectival phrases, and verb phrases. Pronominal verbs were likewise removed, although they were replaced by non-pronominal forms where possible (e.g. *cabrear*—“to piss off”—in place of *cabrearse*—“to get pissed off”).

Part of speech: Similar concessions resulted from not delimiting the corpus search according to part of speech. A handful of words were eliminated which only have a colloquial sense in one particular part of speech: *duro*, for example, as an adjective has a standard, unmarked use as “hard”, but as a noun it is used to refer colloquially to currency—“buck” in American English. Searching by lemma alone would not differentiate between these two definitions, so this and similar words were omitted.

Prevalence of standard equivalent: Finally, words were excluded whose non-colloquial usage was expected to vastly outnumber colloquial attestations in the corpus. *Perro*, for example, is listed in Fitch's dictionary as a colloquial equivalent of *perezoso* (“lazy”), but it was expected that the majority of instances attested in a corpus search would be its archetypal meaning, “dog.” It would be quite difficult to separate the instances using the colloquial definition without manually coding every occurrence, meaning that these were therefore eliminated. Even so, a small number of exceptions were made for words judged to be particularly frequent or

⁹ “Individual (generally male), who fruitlessly hopes to turn his platonic relationship with a person of the opposite sex into a sexual or amorous one.”

emblematic of Peninsular Spanish colloquial speech (*tío*, “dude”/“uncle”), and in cases where no *a priori* judgment could be made, the word was left in.

With these criteria in mind, 171 colloquial words were selected. The next step involved the use of a proprietary copy of the Mark Davies *Corpus del Español: Web/Dialectos* (CdE) to further refine that list. With data drawn from websites and blogs, this corpus provided the informal contexts where colloquial language could be expected. Other advantages included size (2 billion words), recency (the texts were collected in 2013-2014), and the ability to delimit searches by country of origin. Data from the Peninsular Spanish section of this corpus was used to organize the list according to the colloquialisms which non-native speakers would be most likely to encounter and therefore acquire.

Gries (2008) illustrates that, in spite of the prevalence of using raw frequencies of occurrence alone as a direct indicator of a word’s prevalence, more reliable judgments can be made by including measures of dispersion. These account not only for the number of times a word is attested in a corpus, but also for the different types of areas in which it appears. Gries illustrates the difference between frequencies of occurrence and dispersion measures by citing an example from Leech et al. (2001):

They [Leech et al. (2001)] show that the words *HIV*, *keeper*, and *lively* are about equally frequent in the British National Corpus (16 occurrences p.m.), which would usually be interpreted as an indication of their overall similar importance. A look at how these words are distributed in the corpus, however, suggests a very different result. While *lively* and *keeper* both occur in 97 of 100 equally-sized corpus parts, *HIV* occurs in only 62, which already indicates that *HIV* is much more specialized. (Gries 2008, p. 404)

Gries goes on to summarize the benefits and shortcomings of more sophisticated methods of calculating dispersion measures before proposing his own, *DP* (deviation of proportions). A script for calculating *DP* (provided to the researcher by Gries) was applied to the selected colloquial words within the CdE. The resulting 20 most frequent and widely-

dispersed words from this list is provided in Table 1 (the complete list is available in Appendix A):

Table 1

Colloquial words with lowest DP and highest frequency

Word	Translation	DP	Frequency Count
<i>tío</i>	dude	0.8989	19263
<i>rollo</i>	drag	0.9206	11058
<i>pasta</i>	cash	0.9248	14254
<i>chaval</i>	kid	0.9448	9160
<i>pasada</i>	something incredible	0.9450	6524
<i>pelí</i>	movie	0.9494	17645
<i>chorrada</i>	nonsense	0.9582	4285
<i>pega</i>	problem	0.9629	4234
<i>cabrear</i>	to piss off	0.9660	3135
<i>molar</i>	to be cool	0.9665	4898
<i>crack</i>	whiz	0.9672	3993
<i>coco</i>	head	0.9700	3766
<i>coña</i>	joke	0.9740	2417
<i>guay</i>	cool	0.9746	3016
<i>majo</i>	nice	0.9752	2327
<i>curro</i>	job	0.9757	3276
<i>afanar</i>	snatch	0.9819	987
<i>finde</i>	weekend	0.9825	2772
<i>mosquear</i>	annoy	0.9834	1134
<i>cachondeo</i>	joke	0.9837	1458

Table 1 is sorted starting with the most well-dispersed words: *DP* theoretically ranges from 0 to 1, with values close to 0 indicating even distribution throughout corpus parts, and values closer to 1 indicating uneven distribution. The unsurprisingly high *DP* values of the words in Table 1 reflect the contextual restrictions applied to colloquial register.

From these 20 words, the 14 highlighted in blue were chosen for inclusion in the study in accordance with their ability to be conveniently incorporated into scripts inspired by authentic texts written by L2 speakers of Spanish. These texts were taken from a previous study (Marqués-Pascual, in press) which elicited writing samples from university students studying abroad in

Spain. The decision was made to create scripts by combining and adding to existing texts in order to reduce artificiality by presenting language which plausibly could have been produced by an L2 speaker. Because L1 speakers would also perform the same scripts and in order to avoid the risk of errors distracting listeners, most grammatical mistakes were corrected, although less egregious instances of redundancy and awkward structuring or phrasing were left untouched for the sake of increased fidelity to L2 speech.

Sections of three separate L2 texts were modified and expanded in order to create the neutral script. This script contained 14 neutral equivalents of the colloquial words highlighted in Table 1, and the colloquial script was created by replacing those neutral words with their colloquial variants. Finally, a distractor script was prepared which paraphrased the content of the neutral and colloquial scripts. Two L1 speakers of Peninsular Spanish were consulted regarding each of these scripts, confirming that all three could have plausibly been produced by an L1 speaker. The scripts, along with the original passages upon which they were based, are available in Appendix B.

2. Speaker Profiles

A total of five different speakers were selected for the preparation of speech samples. Four of these speakers produced experimental stimuli, while the fifth produced samples designed for use as a distractor. Of the four speakers producing experimental speech samples, two were L2 speakers of Spanish, two were L1 speakers, and each pair of speakers consisted of one male and one female. Besides providing the opportunity to examine how attitudes toward colloquial language change according to gender, using both male and female speakers endowed the experimental design with some degree of redundancy: given that one of the principal drawbacks of the verbal vs. matched guise techniques (i.e. several individuals producing the

speech samples vs. just one) is the concern that variations in voice quality between speakers muddies the effects of target variables, including two speakers of each L1 status meant that if evaluations of both speakers coincided, the result would more likely be attributable to L1 status. Conversely, if evaluations of both speakers differed, individual variation was more likely to have played a role.

Unfortunately, limitations on the number of speakers which could feasibly be analyzed in the same study prohibited the inclusion of two speakers per gender (i.e. 8 speakers in addition to the distractor). This means that, in the case of differing evaluations between speakers of the same L1 status, teasing the effect of gender apart from individual variation would nevertheless remain a challenge¹⁰, but it was decided that 4 total speakers for the production of experimental stimuli met an acceptable compromise.

The speakers were all between the ages of 22 and 33, a range which could plausibly be associated with the colloquial language under investigation without invoking linguistic attitudes explicitly oriented toward younger or older speakers. The L1 speakers both had lived the majority of their lives in Spain and considered themselves native speakers of Spanish, although they grew up speaking minority languages as well (Catalan in the case of the male, Galician in the case of the female). Both L2 speakers were university-educated, L1 speakers of English from the United States. The male had studied introductory Spanish at the university level, and had spent five years living abroad in Spain. The female began taking Spanish as a foreign language classes during secondary school, and had also lived in Spain for one year. Both L2 speakers claimed to have adopted elements of Peninsular Spanish into their interlanguage and expressed comfort

¹⁰ In such a case, comparing gender differences between both L1 statuses could potentially help resolve whether individual variation was at play. That is, if ratings of the female L2 speaker differed from those of the male, but this difference was mirrored in the L1 speakers, gender would more likely be a factor than individual variation.

with using colloquial language characteristic of the region, providing examples such as *guay* (“cool”), *tío* (“dude”), and *molar* (“to be awesome”).¹¹ Once presented with the colloquial script, both speakers reported that they were familiar with most of the words used, and the researcher explained the meaning of any which they did not recognize.

The speaker selected for the distractor samples was female and an L2 speaker of Spanish as well, having lived in Spain for two years. While the distractor could have been either an L1 or an L2 speaker, the latter was selected in case additional data was required to resolve the effects of individual variation; although the distractor did not use the same scripts as the experimental stimuli, her ratings could potentially serve as a point of comparison for other L2 speakers if necessary.

Each of these five speakers agreed to have their speech used in the study, and the samples they provided were examined to ensure factors such as rate of speech and tone remained relatively constant among speakers. In the case of false starts, mispronunciation, repetitions, *etc.*, the researcher either edited out imperfections using audio software or asked speakers to re-record the relevant passage.

These five speakers produced a total of nine recordings: eight experimental guises and one distractor. Table 2 summarizes the 2x2x2 factorial design of the experimental stimuli.

¹¹ Interestingly, both commented that this comfort did not extend outside the area where the words were used by L1 speakers: the female speaker said that, since her return to the United States, she continued to use neutral terms typical of Peninsular Spanish such as *vale* (“okay”), but that she no longer used more colloquial words. The male speaker was living in Spain at the time of recording, but expressed discomfort at using colloquial language learned from Chilean friends “as it’s not a part of the dialogue I’m used to here in Spain.”

Table 2

Independent variables related to speaker characteristics

Speaker Register	Speaker Nativeness	Speaker Gender
Neutral	L1 speaker	Male
Colloquial	L2 speaker	Female

The three columns of Table 2 represent the three principal independent variables of this dissertation. The effect of these variables was measured via the questionnaire described in the following section.

3. Questionnaire

Once the nine guises had been recorded, an electronic questionnaire was prepared using Qualtrics survey software. The general format of the questionnaire consisted of the participant listening to a single audio sample and then answering a series of questions about it before moving on to the next one. The sample was presented such that the participant could listen to it as many times as they liked while answering the questions, although they were instructed to not refer back to a previous sample once they had continued with the questionnaire. The electronic form prevented them from returning to change or review their answers once they moved to the next guise, preventing any sample from altering their perceptions of a previous one.

In total, each participant evaluated three of the nine guises before moving on to the debriefing phase of the questionnaire. These three guises consisted of two experimental stimuli (one produced by an L1 speaker and one by an L2 speaker) separated by a distractor. By presenting three guises to each participant, more data could be collected per individual than by

listening to a single stimulus, but without risking excessive fatigue effects from evaluating more than these three samples. Participants were led to believe that the samples had been collected in a previous study where the speakers had translated a story from English to Spanish before being recorded reading their translation. This accounted for the high level of similarity in content between guises as well as helping to mask the not entirely nativelike dialogue of the L1 speakers—any inauthenticity generated by the unusual phrasing of the script would hopefully be interpreted as side effects of the translation task. Furthermore, it avoided the necessity of procuring trained actors to perform the guises, as the speakers could simply read the scripts rather than attempting to disguise them as spontaneous speech.¹²

Separating two experimental stimuli with a distractor further reduced the chance of participants noticing their identical phrasing. Moreover, rather than presenting the same speaker or script for both experimental stimuli, which again would have risked participants discovering the experimental design, they were led to believe that all three stimuli were entirely different. As such, the level of each independent variable—*speaker register*, *speaker nativeness*, and *speaker gender* (see Table 2)—alternated from the first experimental stimulus to the second. That is, if the participant first heard the colloquial guise produced by a female L2 speaker, the second experimental stimulus would be the neutral guise produced by a male L1 speaker. In this way, every participant evaluated every level of all three independent variables, albeit not in every

¹² The use of prepared scripts rather than spontaneous speech in the examination of informal variation is justified by similar studies in the literature. Ruivivar & Collins (2018) investigated perceptions of nonstandard grammatical constructions in English (see Chapter 2), writing, “Although previous rating studies have used extemporaneous speech samples, and our target forms typically occur in such informal conversation, it was not possible to record extemporaneous speech while simultaneously ensuring that the target forms were produced” (190). Similarly, George (2017) lists the rarity of regional features in spontaneous speech among her justifications for using read samples. The research questions of this dissertation likewise necessitated more carefully-controlled speech production than would be possible in recordings of spontaneous speech.

combination. The starting stimulus for each participant was randomized as well in order to account for order effects (assessed as the independent variable *stimulus order* in Chapter 4).

After listening to each guise, participants responded to a variety of questions by providing a rating of 1-7 on semantic differential scales. These scales are those most commonly used in the matched guise experimental design (Jaworski et al. 2012) and ask participants to provide a rating between two ends of the scale labeled with semantically-opposed terms. For example, participants in this study were asked to evaluate the *pronunciation* of the speakers' Spanish by providing a rating between 1 ("Strong foreign accent") and 7 ("No foreign accent").¹³ While the number of points on these scales differs across the literature,¹⁴ a 7-point scale was considered adequate for the present study.

In addition to the item on *pronunciation*, two other scales were used to evaluate participant attitudes toward the speakers' language proficiency. The first of these was *global language competence* ("*dominio global*")—this was intended as a holistic evaluation of the speakers' language ability which could account for lexical variation in a way that *pronunciation* could not. Finally, research has shown that foreign accentedness and the difficulty a listener has in understanding the speaker are not necessarily equivalent (Munro & Derwing 1995, Derwing & Munro 1997). For this reason, the latter of these two concepts was included under the variable name *comprehensibility*.

After these three questions, the participant filled out a short answer text box instructing them to identify any specific characteristics of the speakers' language which influenced their

¹³ All parts of the questionnaire were in Spanish, although the English translations are provided directly in this section. See Appendix C for the questionnaire's contents in the form they were provided to participants.

¹⁴ In evaluations of foreign accent, George (2017), Llanes (2016), and Muñoz & Llanes (2014) all used 7-point scales, Kennedy & Trofimovich (2008) used a 9-point scale, Martinsen et al. (2014) used a scale from 0-100, and Flege et al. (1995) even used a scale from 0-255.

decision. This provided an opportunity to verify that participants were basing their evaluations on appropriate elements, as well as to provide a qualitative angle to the investigation.

Next, the questionnaire included a pair of questions on the appropriateness of the speakers' language according to context. One item asked how appropriate the speech would be for telling the contents of the story to friends at home (informal context), while the other asked the same question in regard to a police officer (formal context). These two questions were again followed by a text box requesting that the participant elaborate on their response. The next question asked whether the specific words used by the speaker would be appropriate for use by a non-native speaker of Spanish, followed by another text box offering participants an opportunity to explain their response. It should be noted that this question regarding the appropriateness of the language use for non-native speakers was included for guises of both L1 and L2 speakers, the intention being to examine whether attitudes toward the language changed when participants actually heard an L2 speaker produce the language as opposed to considering the question from a more hypothetical standpoint after hearing the language produced by an L1 speaker.

Finally, the questionnaire included the same 7-point scale applied to 12 personality traits. Although the order of these traits was randomized, they were divided into three groups of personality dimensions widely substantiated in the literature (Giles & Billings 2004): *status* (represented in the questionnaire by the terms *successful*, *intelligent*, *educated*, and *competent*), *solidarity* (*pleasant*, *nice*, *sociable*, and *friendly*), and *dynamism* (*active*, *talkative*, *confident*, and *enthusiastic*). The terms for *status* and *solidarity* were taken from a recent study (Dragojevic et al. 2017), while the terms for *dynamism* were adapted from Zahn & Hopper (1985). Research has found that L1 speakers of nonstandard language varieties are typically downgraded in comparison to standard speakers on the *status* dimension (Fuertes et al. 2012) and upgraded on *solidarity* (Giles & Billings

2004). Findings on *dynamism*—a dimension less frequently included in studies than the traditional *status/solidarity* dichotomy—are more mixed, with some studies (Ohama et al. 2000) finding nonstandard accents upgrade *dynamism*, while others (Fuertes et al. 2012) have found them to have the opposite effect. The intent of these questions was to measure whether these ratings varied in the same manner for L2 speakers.

After completing the questions for each of the three guises, the participant proceeded to the debriefing phase. Here, they provided written responses to two more extended questions. First, they were explicitly asked about their attitude toward the use of colloquial language by non-native speakers of Spanish, whether they found such terms impressive or strange, and whether they felt that non-native speakers should limit themselves to a more formal manner of speech. The second question asked them to provide a specific anecdote wherein they had heard colloquial language from an L2 speaker, including where possible the context, their reaction, and the specific words which caught the participant’s attention.

The next section of the debriefing portion of the questionnaire asked participants to answer 6 7-point Likert scale¹⁵ questions eliciting their attitudes toward L2 speakers in general. Questions asked participants to state their level of agreement with statements such as “I like sharing my culture with foreigners” and “When I have to speak with foreigners who don’t speak Spanish well, I feel frustrated.” The responses to these questions formed the independent variable *tolerance* and are discussed in Chapter 4, Section VI.

Finally, participants filled out a page eliciting demographic information such as age, gender, time spent living in Spain, proficiency in languages besides Spanish, *etc.* This information

¹⁵ Likert scales differ from semantic differential scales in that they ask subjects to simply indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement, rather than providing a full range between semantic opposites.

was used prior to analyzing the data in order to ensure that responses were only used from participants who fit the demographic specifications of the study (see Section IV of this chapter).

Some characteristics of the questionnaire described above came about after an experimental version was tested in a small pilot study, the details of which are provided in the following section.

III. PILOT STUDY

Thirteen L1 speakers of Peninsular Spanish (8 males and 5 females, with an average age of 22) completed the pilot study. These participants were assembled through personal contacts of the researcher and in accordance with Human Subjects guidelines. They completed the questionnaire online, receiving a \$10 electronic gift card in exchange for their participation.

While the small number of data points means a detailed analysis of the responses is unwarranted, participant responses generally verified that the experimental design was an effective way to address the research questions of this study. Some small changes were made to the questionnaire as a result of participant responses—for example, certain participants interpreted the question on the language’s appropriateness for a non-native speaker as asking whether it would be appropriate for an L1 speaker to use the language when speaking to an L2 speaker, rather than whether an L2 speaker should themselves use the language. The wording on this and other questions was consequently modified slightly in order to make their intent clearer.

Participants were also asked in the debriefing section to indicate the frequency with which they themselves used the informal words included in the colloquial guise. Although speaker intuitions can hardly be considered an accurate representation of frequency, the intention was to evaluate whether participants perceived any of the selected words as out of the ordinary. In addition to the word in question, participants were provided with a sample sentence

to ensure they were responding to the colloquial sense of the word. Table 3 represents the median and mean rating given by participants for each word, with 1 meaning they never used the word and 7 representing “Very often”:

Table 3

Frequency of use of colloquial items reported in pilot study

Word	Median	Mean
<i>pelí</i> (“movie”)	7	7
<i>finde</i> (“weekend”)	7	6.67
<i>tío</i> (“dude”)	7	6.33
<i>cabrear</i> (“to piss off”)	7	6.33
<i>guay</i> (“cool”)	7	6.22
<i>pasada</i> (“something incredible”)	7	6.11
<i>majo</i> (“nice”)	7	6.11
<i>molar</i> (“to be cool”)	7	5.89
<i>pasta</i> (“cash”)	7	5.78
<i>rollo</i> (“drag”)	6	5.89
<i>curro</i> (“job”)	6	5.44
<i>crack</i> (“whiz”)	5	4.89

The results of this question confirmed the findings of the corpus analysis and further validated the inclusion of the selected terms in the study as words with the requisite frequency to plausibly be acquired by L2 speakers without invoking reactions based purely on their rarity. Even the lowest-rated word, *crack*, still was said to be used very often (‘7’) by a third of the participants, and it was therefore decided that no changes to the scripts would be necessary. It should also be noted that words such as *tío* and *pasta*, which were included in the corpus analysis in Section II.1 despite alternative, non-colloquial meanings, nevertheless were identified by participants as being frequently used in their colloquial form.

With the pilot having confirmed the feasibility of the experimental design, a considerably larger participant group was selected for the full-scale study.

IV. PARTICIPANTS

The study was performed with 220 students enrolled in classes in the Department of Catalan Philology at the University of Alicante. 172 of these participants were female, 46 were male, and 2 declined to provide their gender. The median age of the participants was 18, and 213 considered either Spanish or Catalan to be one of their native languages. The remaining 7 indicated that they had lived in Spain for the majority of their lives, such as one participant who listed Romanian as their native language, but also stated that they had been born in Spain and only lived in Romania for 3.5 months. These participants were not excluded from the data set, although 13 of the original 233 participants were removed on the basis of the demographic information they provided. These included exchange students of various L1s currently studying abroad in Spain, as well as L1 Spanish speakers who had moved to Spain well past the critical period, such as a 46 year-old female from Argentina who moved to Spain at the age of 34. It was assumed that participants such as this one, despite extensive time in Spain, likely developed linguistic attitudes abroad and might not exhibit the same opinions towards Peninsular Spanish colloquialisms as those who had grown up in the country. Although these participants could potentially offer alternative perspectives which could be studied separately from the main data set, they were too few in number to provide a suitable sample population for study. Finally, participants who neglected to give any indication of their heritage or native language were excluded from the study as well.

The majority of the participants (193) indicated that they had at least beginning-level familiarity with English, although only 24 reported having lived outside Spain for over 3 months. 101 claimed basic knowledge or higher of a language besides English, Spanish, and Catalan. The participants' familiarity with these other languages, as well as their enrollment in classes in the Department of Catalan Philology, meant that the participant group was perhaps more aware of

and trained in linguistic matters than the average monolingual speaker, but this should not detract from the group's validity as a target population. A large portion of Spain's population is in fact multilingual, with bilingualism being especially prominent: 26% of Spaniards speak a Spanish minority language, with 17% being Catalan speakers (CIA.gov¹⁶). While this is far from a majority, the participants of this study are nevertheless representative of a sizable portion of the Spanish population.

V. PROCEDURE

Participants were informed that they were participating in a study regarding the manner in which listeners intuit characteristics of a speaker's personality through their speech, but the specific purpose of the study was not stated and no explicit reference to colloquial language was made. All subjects gave their informed consent to participate in the study in accordance with Human Subjects guidelines and were compensated for their time either with a gift card or treats such as candy or chocolate. One small group of participants (33) performed the questionnaire electronically from home due to their limited availability, but the remainder did so in a computer lab supervised by the researcher, who was present to clarify any questions regarding the investigation or questionnaire.

Participants proceeded at their own pace throughout the study, using headphones to play the speech samples at their leisure. The average completion time was 33 minutes, and the median time was 26. Certain groups experienced complications which negatively affected the testing environment such as having to share headphones with a partner, so participants were informed that the samples they would hear would not all be the same, and that they should be

¹⁶ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sp.html>

careful to use headphones connected to their own computer rather than accidentally evaluating their partner's audio sample. As will be seen in Chapter 4 Section VI, these inconveniences were coded under the independent variable *setting control*.

VI. CONCLUSION

Upon completing the administration of the questionnaire, responses were reviewed in order to ensure the validity of the data used in the analysis. This included making some exclusions based on demographic information as described in Section IV. After making these exclusions, 220 participants remained for whom the data compiled and analyzed. The results of this analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Results and Analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the questionnaire's results (the formulation of which is described in Chapter 3). Section II examines the correlation between colloquial language use and perceptions of linguistic proficiency, as measured by the dependent variables *global language competence*, *pronunciation*, and *comprehensibility*. Section III evaluates personality judgments grouped under the dimensions of *status*, *solidarity*, and *dynamism*. Sections IV and V assess the *appropriateness* of colloquial language use according to context and as a linguistic target for L2 speakers, respectively. For Sections II, IV, and V, the numerical results are presented first, followed by the written comments with which participants explained their rating. Section VI briefly discusses some predictors excluded from the statistical analysis and the reasons for their exclusion, while Section VII examines participant responses to debriefing questions which directly asked for opinions and anecdotes related to the use of colloquial language by L2 speakers. Finally, Section VIII summarizes the results.

II. PERCEPTIONS OF LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY

The first section of the questionnaire investigated whether the use of colloquial lexical items improved evaluations of L2 speakers' linguistic proficiency. As described in Chapter 3, participants were asked to rate each speaker according to *global language competence*, *pronunciation*, and *comprehensibility* on a 7-point semantic differential scale, with 1 being the lowest rating, and 7 the highest. Participants then provided a brief, written explanation of their responses before continuing to the next question.

The numerical data of this section (as well as the others in this chapter) were analyzed using conditional inference trees. Levshina (2015, p. 291) describes conditional inference trees as “non-parametric tree-structure models of regression and classification that can serve as an alternative to multiple regression.” Based on binary recursive partitioning, this method of analysis is useful when a large number of higher order interactions are present, as was anticipated in this investigation: predictors for each question under analysis included *speaker register* (colloquial vs. neutral), *speaker nativeness* (L1 speaker of Spanish vs. L2 speaker), *speaker gender* (male vs. female), and *stimulus position* (first vs. second¹⁷). Additional factors outside the target variables of the experiment recorded but deemed to have a minimal influence on the results and therefore excluded from the conditional inference trees are recorded in Section VI. The conditional inference tree predicted values for the dependent ordered factor variable *rating* (1-7), and a separate tree was generated for each dependent variable; these are presented in the following sections.

¹⁷ As described in Chapter 3, each participant was presented with two randomly-ordered experimental stimuli separated by a distractor.

1. Global Language Competence

Figure 1 visualizes the conditional inference tree generated for the *global language competence* measure:

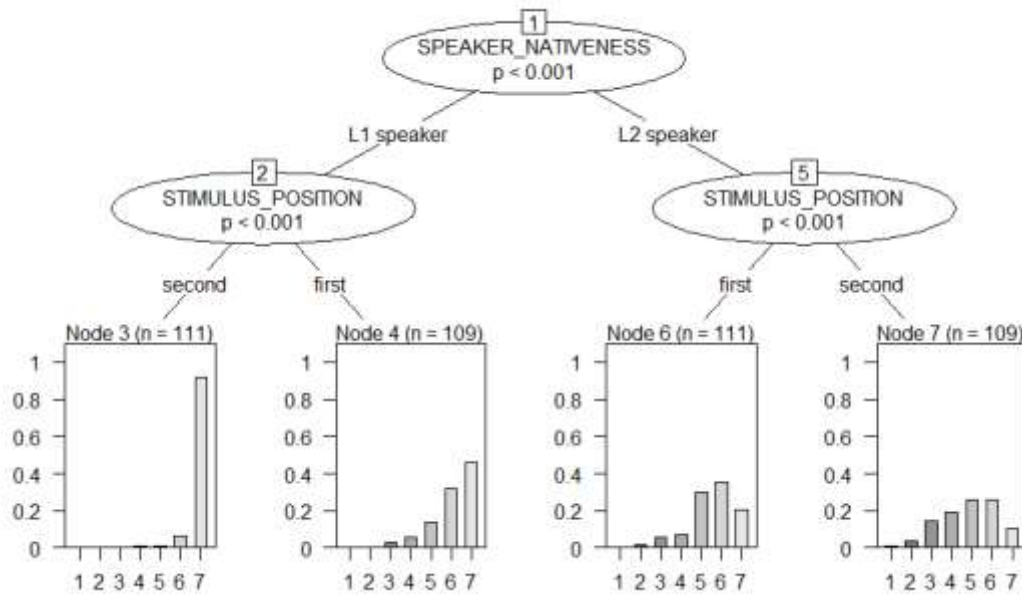


Figure 1: *Global language competence* conditional inference tree

Broadly speaking, the conditional inference tree displays only those predictors which the algorithm used to generate the tree found to be significant, along with the predicted ratings for each combination thereof. Starting at the top of the tree, the data is divided according to the most significant predictor (Node 1 in Figure 1). In this case, where the predictor has only two levels, each level of this predictor receives its own branch, which is further separated according to predictors of decreasing significance (Nodes 2 and 5). Predictors which did not meet the 0.05 significance threshold are not included in the tree visualization. Finally, the predicted values for each combination of predictors is displayed along the bottom row (Nodes 3-4, 6-7), with each bar representing the percentage of ratings corresponding to that number. The classification accuracy for the inference tree—that is, the percentage of predicted outcomes which match the

observed data—was 50%, a substantial increase over the 14% (1/7) probability of assigning the correct rating by random chance.

As can be seen in Figure 1, *speaker nativeness* is the most significant predictor of *global language competence*, followed by *stimulus position*. The inference tree predicted that L1 speakers (Nodes 3-4) would receive higher ratings than L2 speakers (Nodes 6-7), as evidenced by the high proportion of 7s predicted for L1 speakers (between 40-90% of total predictions) in comparison to L2 speakers (roughly 10-20%). This result is unsurprising, as L1 speakers should be expected to demonstrate a higher degree of language proficiency than L2 speakers.

The results of *stimulus position* provide a more interesting finding. Ratings of L1 speakers were substantially higher if heard second (Node 3) than if heard first (Node 4), while ratings of L2 speakers were predicted to be slightly lower when heard second (Node 6 vs. Node 7). These results indicate that participants were using the first stimulus¹⁸ as a frame of reference, and then adjusting their ratings of the second stimulus accordingly. As described in Chapter 3, predictor levels were alternated such that if the first stimulus was an L1 speaker, the second was an L2 speaker, and vice-versa. Therefore, the extremely high ratings of L1 speakers when rated second (Node 3) likely represents a comparison to an L2 speaker baseline, resulting in much higher ratings of the L1 speaker than when it was presented as the first stimulus.

Although evaluations of L2 speakers similarly decreased when rated second (i.e. when compared to an L1 speaker baseline),¹⁹ the decrease was not as dramatic as the parallel increase

¹⁸ One might think the distractor clip contributed a priming influence as well. However, since the same distractor occurred in the same location for every participant, the influence of the distractor was uniform across all levels of experimental stimuli. Thus, any variation between ratings must have been caused by the first stimulus.

¹⁹ This same effect can be seen in ratings of the distractor clip. Also produced by a non-native speaker, ratings of the distractor were more negative when preceded by a native speaker (a conditional inference tree is provided in Appendix D). The impact of the first stimulus on the distractor is further evidence of the priming effect the first stimulus had on the second.

in second-stimulus L1 speaker ratings: ratings of ‘7’, for example, dropped by around 10% for L2 speakers, in contrast to the roughly 40% increase experienced by L1 speakers. This potentially occurred due to a floor effect in participant ratings; while participants increased their ratings of L1 speakers substantially when comparing the second stimulus to an L2 baseline, they did not appear to evaluate L2 speakers as entirely devoid of linguistic proficiency just because they did not match that of L1 speakers. This tendency of second-stimulus ratings increasing for L1 speakers and decreasing for L2 speakers will be seen repeatedly throughout this chapter, and will hereafter be referred to as the ‘comparison effect.’

More important for our purposes, however, than the impact of *speaker nativeness* and *stimulus position*, is the complete absence of *speaker register* as a significant predictor in determining *global language competence*. Regardless of whether the speaker used colloquial or neutral language, neither native nor L2 speakers received significantly differing evaluations. This result indicates that, as far as *global language competence* is concerned, colloquial language might not offer any significant benefits, but it also does not seem to affect the speaker negatively.

2. Pronunciation

Using the same process as described above, a conditional inference tree was generated for participants’ *pronunciation* ratings. This inference tree correctly predicted the observed data 56% of the time, which made it slightly more accurate than the 50% classification accuracy of the tree generated for *global language competence*. The *pronunciation* tree is presented in Figure 2:

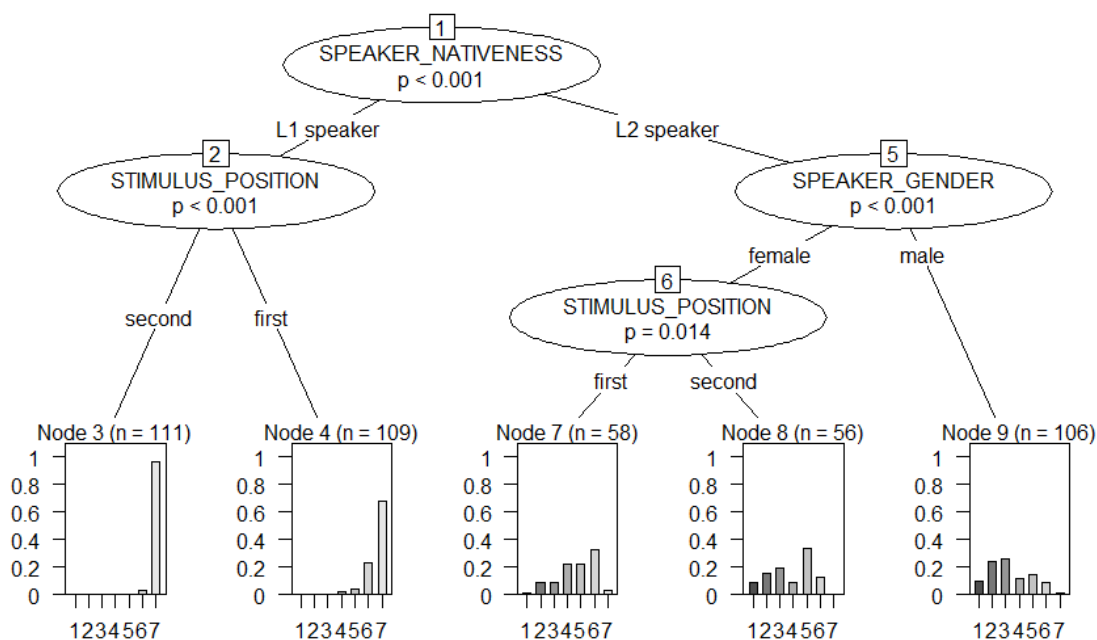


Figure 2: *Pronunciation conditional inference tree*

As was the case with *global language competence*, *speaker nativeness* was once again the most significant predictor of *pronunciation* ratings (Node 1). Again, this was unsurprising, as the L1 speakers exhibiting superior pronunciation to L2 speakers was to be expected. Also as before, the L1 speakers received much higher ratings if their speech sample came second (Node 3 vs. Node 4), presumably due to the comparison effect discussed in Section II.1: the first speech sample (an L2 speaker in the case of Node 3) likely established a frame of reference for the participant, and the second sample ratings were given in response to that baseline (hence the higher ratings when judged in comparison to an L2 speaker).

Node 5, however, demonstrates that *speaker gender* was a significant predictor in the case of the L2 speaker, with the male L2 speaker (Node 9) receiving lower ratings than the females in either stimulus position (Nodes 7 and 8). This was likely a reflection of individual speaker profiles, although it is a somewhat surprising result, as one might have expected the male speaker to exhibit superior pronunciation due to his increased time living in Spain relative to the female (see the speaker profiles in Chapter 3). On the other hand, many participants' written

evaluations (further explored in Section II.4) of the male L2 speaker critiqued the lack of phonemic contrast between /θ/ and /s/, a distinction which is far from universal in Spanish dialects around the world but in fact specifically unique to most peninsular Spanish varieties. Out of 7 possible environments for this distinction in each of the colloquial and neutral guises—100% of which were produced by both L1 speakers—the female L2 speaker realized /θ/ 5 and 4 times respectively, while the male L2 speaker did so 0 times in both.²⁰ While other aspects of each individual’s pronunciation would have affected decisions as well, the male L2 speaker’s complete omission of this highly salient regional marker might have played a crucial role in negative evaluations of his *pronunciation*. This explanation corroborates the work of George (2013b, 2014, 2017) highlighted in Chapter 2, which found that the production of regional phonological variants improved evaluations of accent in L2 speakers.

The lack of this regional marker could potentially explain why *stimulus position* proved a significant factor for the female L2 speaker, but not the male. The female exhibited the same trend explained above, receiving lower ratings when heard second (Node 8 vs. Node 7) as a result of comparison with an L1 speaker baseline. Evaluations of the male, however, were not significantly affected by the ordering of stimuli. It is possible that the complete absence of /θ/ caused participants to rate the male so low even on the first stimulus that it made little difference whether or not they were compared to an L1 speaker baseline.

²⁰ Several explanations exist for this absence. In describing whether he actively sought to adopt any specific variety of Spanish, the male speaker stated “I’ve slowly adopted to [sɪð] standard Spanish, sometimes it moves toward a more Andalusian style. Specifically, I’ve moved more to the ‘th’ / ‘Z’ and (sometimes) ‘C’ sound.” As detailed in Chapter 2, speakers’ intention to produce /θ/ frequently does not align with actual rates of production (e.g. Ringer-Hilfinger (2012)). Alternatively, some Andalusian dialects use /s/ in phonemic contexts where most peninsular dialects would produce /θ/, so the omission of /θ/ may even be a deliberate dialectal decision. On the other hand, the speaker distinguishes between the graphemes ⟨z⟩ and ⟨c⟩; both are realized as /θ/ in peninsular Spanish, but ⟨c⟩ only does so in specific orthographic environments, while ⟨z⟩ does so unilaterally. Perhaps due to his uncertainty in regard to these orthographic environments, the speaker indicates that his level of /θ/ production with ⟨c⟩ is lower than with ⟨z⟩. Every instance of /θ/ in the prepared scripts happened to be represented with ⟨c⟩, meaning that the speaker was possibly less likely to produce /θ/.

Despite the effects of *speaker nativeness*, *gender*, and *stimulus position*, the most notable result of the conditional inference tree is the absence of *speaker register* as a significant predictor. As was the case in the analysis of *global language competence*, the use of colloquial lexical items was not found to correlate either positively or negatively with evaluations of the speaker's *pronunciation*. While the regional marker /θ/ may have played a role in this category, with the female L2 speaker's increased ratings hinting at the benefits of employing regional pronunciation, utilizing colloquial lexical items does not appear to either help or hurt L2 speakers.

3. Comprehensibility

The conditional inference tree of *comprehensibility* proved to have the highest classification accuracy of the trees presented in Section II, with predicted values matching the observed data 63% of the time. Figure 3 represents the results:

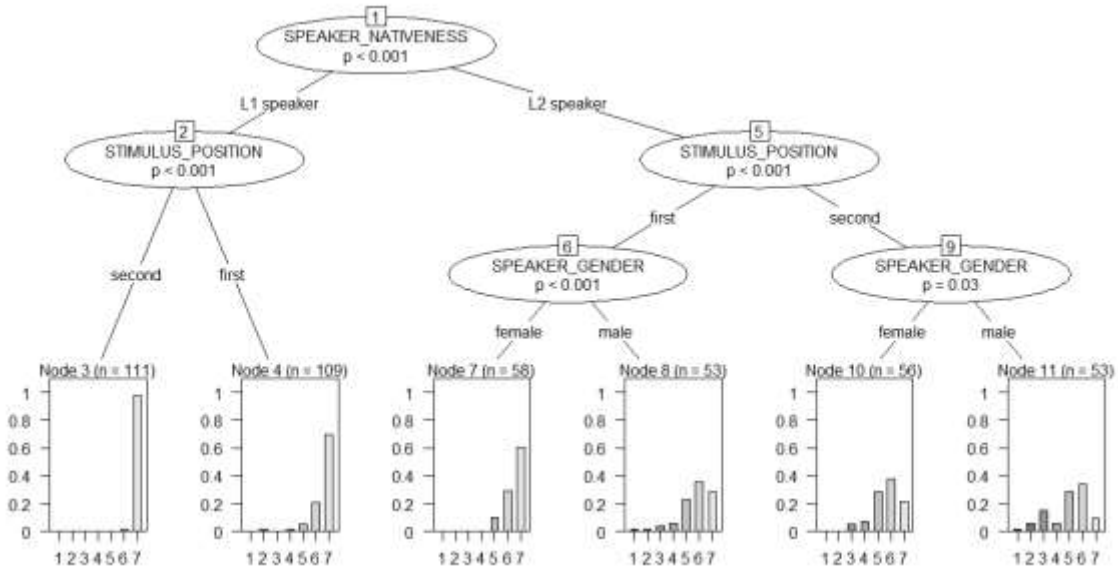


Figure 3: *Comprehensibility* conditional inference tree

Figure 3 demonstrates that *comprehensibility* followed the same tendencies as *global language competence* and *pronunciation*. *Speaker nativeness* once again was the most significant predictor, with

positive ratings toward L1 speakers becoming even more so when the speech sample was heard second (Nodes 3 and 4), and thereby compared with an L2 speaker baseline.

L2 speakers also followed the trend established above, receiving higher ratings when presented first (Nodes 7 and 8) than second (Nodes 10 and 11). Unlike the L2 speaker predictions in the inference tree generated for *pronunciation*, which only included *stimulus position* as a significant predictor for females, Figure 3 predicts male L2 speaker ratings would also decrease when presented as the second experimental stimulus. Section II.2 hypothesized that male *pronunciation* saw no effect from *stimulus position* due to a floor effect, but male L2 speaker *comprehensibility* ratings were sufficiently high in the first stimulus (Node 8) to show a commensurate drop when presented second (Node 11). The L2 female (Nodes 7 and 10) received higher ratings than her male counterpart (Nodes 8 and 11) in both corresponding stimulus positions, which may have resulted from more nativelike production on the part of the female speaker as described in Section II.2 on *pronunciation*.²¹

Finally, like *global language competence* and *pronunciation*, *speaker register* again had no significant effect on ratings. Ratings of *comprehensibility* remained the same regardless of whether or not a speaker used colloquial language.

4. Written Responses

As explained in Chapter 3, participants were asked to provide a short, written explanation for their ratings of *global language competence*, *pronunciation*, and *comprehensibility*. These written responses are presented here.

²¹ It should be noted, however, that despite this interpretation, Node 9 does not add a great deal of information from that provided in Figure 2: although *speaker gender* was identified as a significant predictor in the second stimulus, both male and female speakers received predictions of 6 most frequently, followed by 5, which makes Figure 3 very similar to Figure 2.

Given the fact that *speaker register* did not appear as a significant predictor for any of the three items measured in Section II, one might question whether participants were cognizant of the differences in experimental stimuli. The written comments, however, demonstrate that the use of colloquial language was indeed salient to participants: 48 comments explicitly mentioned colloquial language as having affected their judgments, at times specifically citing the lexical items selected for the study:

(1) “*Ha utilizado un lenguaje con expresiones juveniles: ‘mola, pasta, rollo, curro’.*”²²

(“She used language with expressions characteristic of young people: ‘*mola, pasta, rollo, curro*’”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (colloquial register)

The frequency with which participants commented on colloquial language use is interesting in light of the fact that it did not significantly affect their ratings. This is potentially a case of flawed introspection on the part of the subjects—that is, they may have incorrectly made a *post hoc* attribution of their rating to the use of colloquial language, thinking that it affected their judgment when it actually didn’t.

Furthermore, more comments explicitly addressed colloquialisms when they were produced by L1 speakers (31) than when L2 speakers used the same language (17). This is perhaps because the questions addressed linguistic proficiency, which meant that participants prioritized the critique of non-native pronunciation when commenting on L2 speakers, whereas the comparatively flawless performance of L1 speakers left room to mention lexical aspects.

Of the 17 mentions of L2 use of colloquialisms, 8 of these were negative, 6 neutral, and 3 positive. Positive comments indicated that the knowledge of colloquial language counterbalanced the effects of poor pronunciation:

- (2) *“Aunque su pronunciación no sea su punto fuerte, puedo observar que el conocimiento de un lenguaje más coloquial adaptado a ciertos contextos, indica un alto conocimiento del hablante en esta lengua.”*

(“Even though his pronunciation isn’t his strong point, I can observe that the knowledge of more colloquial language adapted to certain contexts indicates a high level of knowledge of the speaker in this language.”)

—Evaluation of male L2 speaker (colloquial register)

Whereas this participant felt that the use of colloquial language revealed linguistic proficiency which would have not been apparent based on the speaker’s accent alone, other individuals held the opposite view. Negative comments cited a cognitive disconnect resulting from colloquial language produced in a foreign accent:

- (3) *“Usa expresiones bastante españolas, lo que te suena raro al escucharlo con un acento tan extranjero.”*

(“She uses very Spanish expressions, which sounds strange when hearing them with such a foreign accent.”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (colloquial register)

It is unclear from this comment whether the participant means that colloquial language use would sound strange coming from any foreigner, or if it is simply this particular speaker’s level of accent which provokes the reaction.

Interestingly, where (2) evaluated the use of colloquial language as representing a high level of linguistic achievement in L2 speakers, the same language was appraised negatively when produced by L1 speakers:

- (4) *“Así, a grandes rasgos, se observa que utiliza un lenguaje muy coloquial, con expresiones tales como ‘guay’, ‘rollo’, ‘crack’, etc. Por tanto, es muy fácil de entender pero no demuestra un dominio muy extenso del lenguaje español.”*

(“Thus, broadly speaking, one can observe that she uses very colloquial language, with expressions such as ‘guay’, ‘rollo’, ‘crack’, etc. For that reason, she

²² The written comments throughout this chapter have been edited to omit typographic errors/conform with conventional spelling/capitalization/etc. Instances where meaning was ambiguous have been left untouched.

is very easy to understand but doesn't demonstrate a very extensive command of the Spanish language.”)

—Evaluation of female L1 speaker (colloquial register)

Therefore, the very language which some participants identified as representative of a linguistic deficit in an L1 speaker (as seen in (4)) was labeled by other participants as demonstrative of considerable knowledge in an L2 speaker ((2)). This mirrors the double standard discussed in Chapter 2, but in the opposite direction: although not substantiated through any statistically significant differences in the numerical data, the written comments give some indication that the set of expectations differ according to a speaker's L1. Eight total comments identified L1 speaker use of colloquialisms as incorrect or uneducated, while no participant made the same criticism with respect to L2 speakers.

Furthermore, criticisms of foreign accent were less frequent when the L2 speaker employed colloquial language: 26 participants critiqued the L2 speakers' foreign accent (“*Se nota que es extranjero*”, “You can tell he's a foreigner”) in the neutral guise, but only 18 did so in the colloquial samples. Similarly, mentions of specific errors in pronunciation (such as difficulties in pronouncing the Spanish alveolar trill [r] and alveolar tap [ɾ]) were less frequent in the male colloquial guise (18 mentions) than the neutral one (31). In particular, comments on the omission of the peninsular Spanish /θ/ by both genders—a characteristic which was perceived as a pronunciation error and not simply a dialectal idiosyncrasy (“*pronunciación de la 'c' como si fuese una 's'*”, “pronunciation of the ‘c’ as if it were an ‘s’”)—were reduced from 11 in the neutral guise to 5 in the colloquial one.

It is difficult to say whether participants were truly less critical or less cognizant of non-nativelike production in the colloquial guise, or whether the use of colloquialisms simply provided an extra feature on which to comment, thereby making it less likely for participants to take the time to mention non-nativelike pronunciation. If the former were the case, one would

have expected *speaker register* to have appeared as a significant predictor in the evaluations of linguistic proficiency above, which it did not. This, combined with the unreliable nature of participant introspection in accurately capturing the factors which affect their judgment, means that the latter must be assumed to be the more likely explanation.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the reduction in comments on non-nativelike production was not uniform in both genders. Although it was stated above that comments on pronunciation errors of the male L2 speaker were reduced from 31 in the neutral guise to 18 in the colloquial one, the female speaker did not receive the same benefit: while mentions of foreign accent were reduced very slightly in the female colloquial guise (from 11 to 9), that same guise received slightly more criticisms of pronunciation (22 comments in the neutral guise, 26 in the colloquial one), despite the higher ratings of *pronunciation* and *comprehensibility* assigned to the female L2 speaker in comparison to the male (Sections II.2 and II.3). Covert prestige assigned to informal language is typically more associated with males than females (Trudgill 1972), which could potentially explain why the male speaker received a greater reduction in critiques than the female. Again, caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions about *speaker register* from this evidence, but the fact remains that the male L2 speaker does seem to have drawn less explicit criticism when employing colloquial language, even if it did not significantly improve evaluations in Sections II.1-II.3.

5. Summary

This section explored the correlation between colloquial language use and ratings of linguistic proficiency as measured by *global language competence*, *pronunciation*, and *comprehensibility*. As far as the quantitative results are concerned, *speaker register* was not found to be a significant predictor of ratings in any of the three categories. In terms of measures of linguistic proficiency,

while L2 speakers may not have received any numerically-attested benefits, they perhaps more importantly suffered no penalties as would be expected from the proponents of the double standard in Chapter 2.

While the quantitative results provided no evidence of large-scale benefits or drawbacks, the written comments indicated that individual attitudes do vary substantially, with some participants finding the use of colloquialisms to be incompatible with non-nativelike production, and others claiming that such language counterbalances deficiencies in pronunciation. Moreover, the reduced criticism of accent and pronunciation in the male colloquial guise suggested that colloquial language might help mask or at least distract from lower levels of linguistic proficiency. While this hypothesis was not borne out in the quantitative data and could simply have resulted from the nature of the experimental task, it does leave open the possibility that colloquial language use does color listener perceptions of their attitudes, if not the attitudes themselves: a male learner who is sensitive about his accent could potentially avoid criticism of listeners on a conscious level, even if that listener unconsciously retains those unfavorable evaluations.

This section also found some indirect evidence potentially supporting George's (2013b, 2014, 2017) findings on the impact of regional phonetic markers on evaluations of linguistic proficiency. The male L2 speaker received significantly lower ratings of *pronunciation* and *comprehensibility* than the female one, despite a longer stay in Spain. This same speaker, however, exhibited a complete absence of the peninsular Spanish /θ/, whereas the female speaker did employ the regional marker. While the difference in ratings could have been caused by a wide variety of individual factors, it nevertheless points to the potential benefits of accommodating to regional phonological features.

Moreover, the fact that *speaker register* did not correlate with the presence or absence of regional phonological markers suggests that speakers pay no penalty in employing regional lexical variation without also incorporating corresponding phonological variants. Although this question was not incorporated into the present study's experimental design, it does seem that the use of colloquial language does not need to be accompanied by regional phonological markers. A second-language speaker living in Spain but reluctant to adopt regional phonological variants (such as those documented in Ringer-Hilfinger 2012), for example, could potentially produce Spanish colloquial items without fear of consequences as far as their linguistic proficiency is concerned.

One final result of this section is the effect of *stimulus order*: it seems that participants established a baseline using the first stimulus, and then issued ratings comparing the second stimulus to the first. This meant that participants evaluated the second stimulus more positively in terms of linguistic proficiency when it was an L1 speaker, but more negatively when the second sample was an L2 speaker. The existence of this comparison effect is a consequence of the study's experimental design and relatively unimportant as far as its research questions are concerned, but it will be useful in interpreting the results of future sections.

III. PERCEPTIONS OF PERSONALITY TRAITS

This section will report results on how attitudes toward the speakers' personality traits varied according to *speaker register*. As described in Chapter 3, participants rated speakers according to 12 attributes commonly investigated in language attitudes research using the same 7-point semantic differential scales as those presented in Section II. The intention was to ascertain whether L2 speakers conform to the variation typically observed among L1 speakers, or if the use of colloquial language provokes different responses according to the speaker's L1.

Section III.1 describes the principal components analysis used to condense the 12 attributes into dimensions commonly referenced in the literature, while Sections III.2 and III.3 analyze the results according to these dimensions.

1. Principal Components Analysis

Chapter 3 describes the tendency in language attitudes research to condense a wide array of measured social characteristics into a smaller number of broad dimensions. These dimensions traditionally fall along a *status/solidarity* dichotomy, with some works (e.g. Zahn & Hopper 1985) advocating for a third dimension, *dynamism*. The participant data for the 12 personality characteristics included in the questionnaire were analyzed by means of a principal components analysis. The aim of this method, as described by Levshina (2015, p. 351) is “to reduce a large number of correlated quantitative variables to a small set of underlying dimensions.” In the present study, the principal components analysis was used to verify that the traits could be condensed into the groupings expected from the literature when including them in the conditional inference trees.

Table 4 shows the results for the top three principal components (labeled as PC1, PC2, and PC3), which cumulatively accounted for 76% of the variance in the data.²³

²³ The relative contribution of each principal component to the variance is included in Appendix E.

Table 4

Factor loadings for personality characteristics

TRAIT	PC1	PC2	PC3
Successful	0.7508	-0.3776	-0.0901
Intelligent	0.6728	-0.5794	-0.0114
Educated	0.6032	-0.6660	0.0189
Competent	0.7304	-0.3643	-0.0451
Pleasant	0.7944	0.0274	0.4100
Nice	0.7957	0.2209	0.3944
Sociable	0.7902	0.3515	0.0755
Friendly	0.8240	0.2696	0.2606
Active	0.8028	0.1647	-0.0470
Talkative	0.7091	0.3810	-0.3805
Confident	0.7427	0.0849	-0.4607
Enthusiastic	0.7897	0.2257	-0.2120

The numbers in the table represent how strongly each trait correlates with each of the principal components. The closer the value to 1, the more positive the correlation, and the closer to -1, the more negative, with similar values among different traits indicating that those traits can be condensed into a single dimension. The values for the first principal component (PC1, which itself constituted 57% of the overall variance with a standard of deviation of 2.608) did not distinguish any of the personality traits from the rest. As indicated by the bold values in the table, however, the second and third principal components (PC2 and PC3, respectively) demonstrated that the traits patterned according to the expected dimensions: *Successful*, *intelligent*, *educated*, and *competent*, characteristics associated with the dimension of *status*, were the only factors to load negatively on PC2, and therefore could be grouped together. On the other hand, *pleasant*, *nice*, *sociable*, and *friendly*, representative of *solidarity*, and *active*, *talkative*, *confident*, and *enthusiastic*, which correspond with *dynamism*, all loaded positively on PC2. The *status* and *solidarity* groupings of the traits therefore matched the dimensions expected from Dragojevic et al. (2017).

The groupings were somewhat less clear-cut in PC3. For the most part, the *solidarity* traits distinguished themselves from the other two dimensions by loading positively, but *educated* (a *status* trait) also loaded positively—albeit at a very low level (0.0189)—while *sociable* (a *solidarity* trait) was only very slightly positive (0.0755) in comparison to others in the same dimension. PC3 therefore generally confirmed the expected tripartite division, but not as clearly as the two-way *status/solidarity* division suggested by PC2. Furthermore, PC3 represented only 7% of the overall variance, a relatively small number in comparison to PCs 1 and 2 (57% and 13%, respectively). Both in light of these reasons and in order to facilitate the statistical analyses in Sections III.2 and III.3 by reducing overall degrees of freedom, the *solidarity* and *dynamism* traits were collapsed into one dimension. This decision was felt to be methodologically justifiable due to the tendency to not distinguish *dynamism* in the literature (Zahn and Hopper 1985), as well as some indications that *solidarity* and *dynamism* pattern similarly with respect to the use of nonstandard language (Giles & Billings 2004).

As such, the data from the twelve personality traits listed in Table 4 were collapsed into two groups: *status* and *solidarity/dynamism*. Sections III.2 and III.3 analyze the conditional inference trees generated for each dimension according to the same predictors used in Section II: *speaker register*, *speaker nativeness*, and *speaker gender*. Again, a rating of ‘7’ represented the most positive evaluation, while a ‘1’ represented the negative end of the scale.

2. Status

The conditional inference tree for *status* had a classification accuracy of 32% and found *speaker register* to be the most important predictor ($p < 0.001$). Although this classification accuracy is much lower than those found in Section II, it still represents an over twofold improvement over the 14% (1/7) chance of simply assigning ratings randomly. Because the tree

included a higher number of nodes than those in Section II, two separate figures will represent each level of *speaker register*. The full tree is available in Appendix D.

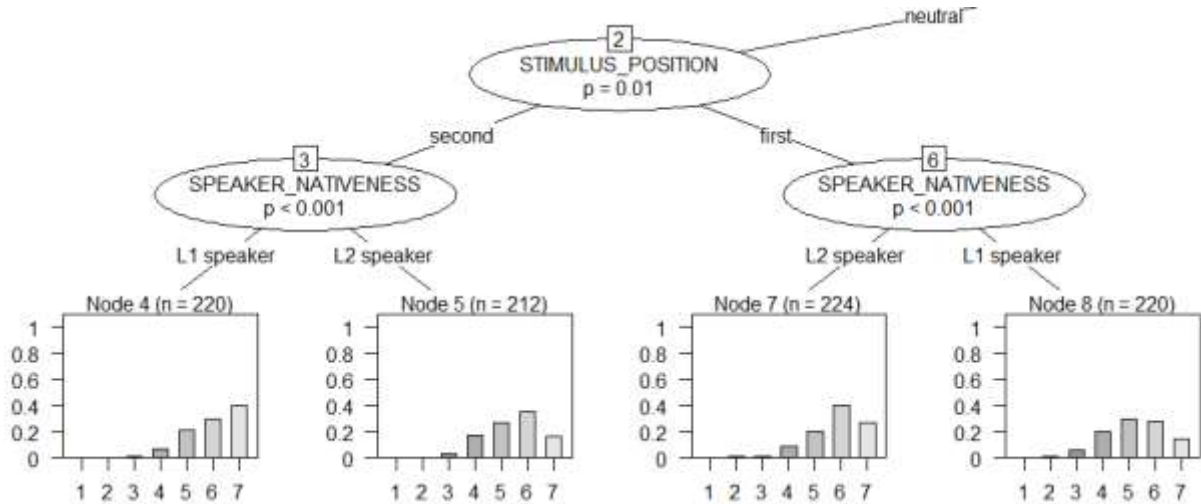


Figure 4 represents the neutral level of *speaker register*. As was the case in Section II, *stimulus position* once again had a significant effect. When presented first, L2 speakers (Node 7) actually received higher ratings of *status* than L1 speakers (Node 8). One possible explanation is that participants may have associated speaking a second language with increased cognitive skills (see Adesope et al. 2010 for an overview)—the L2 speakers may have been perceived as more *successful*, *intelligent*, etc. because they performed the same task as the L1 speakers, but in a foreign language.

When presented second, however, the roles were reversed. Here, L1 speakers (Node 4) received higher ratings than L2 speakers evaluated at the same time (Node 5). This is most likely another example of the experimentally-induced comparison effect discussed in Section II.1. Notably, however, this increase in ratings in the second stimulus for L1 speakers was not accompanied by a commensurate decrease in L2 speakers: Node 5 does show a slight drop in ratings in comparison to first stimulus (Node 7), but ratings were still relatively positive. Again,

this is potentially attributable to an appreciation for the intellectual challenge posed by speaking a foreign language.

Figure 5 visualizes the results for the colloquial register:

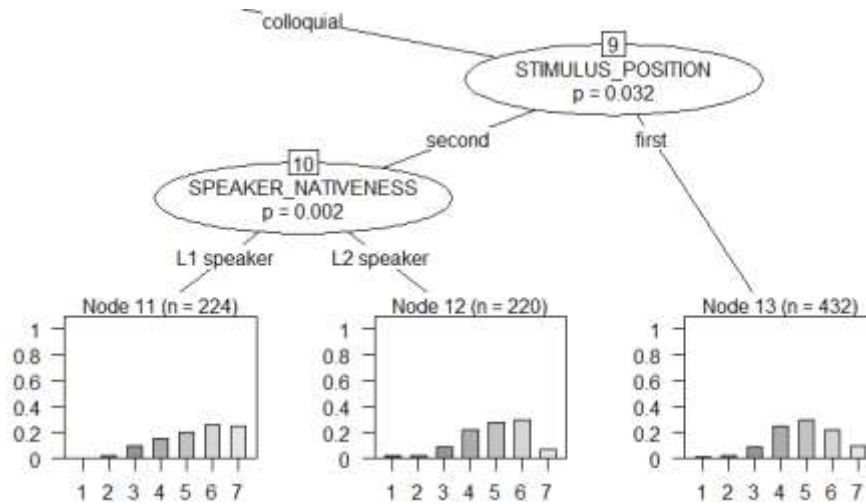


Figure 5: *Status* conditional inference tree, colloquial register

Again, *stimulus position* was a significant predictor. When the colloquial guise was presented first (Node 13), ratings of *status* were mixed, regardless of *speaker nativeness*. When presented second, however, the L2 guise (Node 12) remained fairly similar overall, while the native one (Node 11) was evaluated slightly more positively. The difference in ratings is comparatively small, but it mirrors the trend seen in the neutral register, and again is most likely a result of comparison with an L2 speaker baseline.

When comparing the neutral register to the colloquial one (Figures 6 and 7), L1 speakers were expected from the literature to exhibit a decrease in *status* ratings, but this decrease is fairly minimal (compare Node 8 to Node 13). L2 speakers, however, experience a more severe penalty: their higher rating in the neutral register (Node 7) drops much more precipitously in the colloquial guise (Node 13). Participants do not associate the knowledge of colloquialisms with *status* due to increased linguistic knowledge; instead, L2 speakers seem to be subject to the same penalties as L1 speakers, but to a greater degree. This negative effect is also visible in the second

stimulus. In this case, the penalty for L1 speakers is more clearly visible (Nodes 4 and 11) due to the high ratings of the neutral guise caused by the comparison effect, and L2 speakers (Nodes 5 and 12) experience a minor drop in ratings.

In sum, the use of colloquial language caused participants to attribute lower ratings of *status* to both native and L2 speakers. The knowledge of colloquial language did not seem to activate perceptions of increased *status* due to a wider vocabulary than that typically expected of second language speakers. Instead, L2 speakers experienced the same effects as already established in the literature for L1 speakers, with the former facing this penalty to a slightly greater degree than the latter. Gender did not significantly affect the results for any level of *speaker nativeness* or *register*, meaning that neither differing attitudes toward language use by different genders nor the individual characteristics of any speaker played a significant role in the evaluation of *status*.

3. Solidarity/Dynamism

In contrast to the insignificance of *speaker gender* with respect to *status*, the conditional inference tree for *solidarity/dynamism* found *speaker gender* to be the most significant predictor for participant ratings ($p < 0.001$). The classification accuracy of this inference tree was nearly identical to that generated for *status*, at 33%. Like *status*, the inference tree for *solidarity/dynamism* will be presented in two halves, this time according to gender. The complete tree is available in Appendix D.

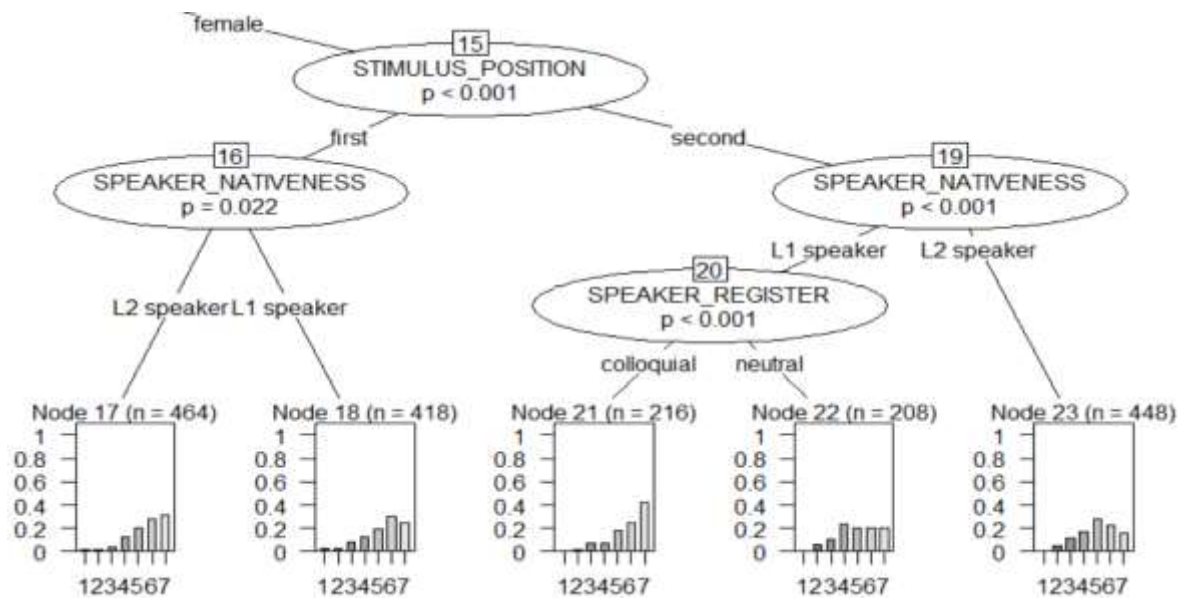


Figure 6: *Solidarity/dynamism* conditional inference tree, female gender

Figure 6 represents the results of the conditional inference tree for the female level of *speaker gender*. *Stimulus position* once again showed itself to be a significant predictor of ratings. When the stimuli were presented first, *speaker register* played no significant role in participant ratings. Interestingly, despite suggestions in the literature (Giles & Billings 2004) that ratings of *solidarity/dynamism* should be higher for members of an in-group—that is, L1 speakers—L2 speakers actually received very slightly higher ratings (Nodes 17 and 18). The difference is minimal, with both levels of *speaker nativeness* generating ratings trending toward positive, but perhaps the L2 speakers' marginal increase in ratings reflect the implication of extroversion in speaking a foreign language, similar to the explanation provided for the same phenomenon in Section III.2.

Ratings more closely followed the predicted pattern in the second stimulus, where L1 speakers experienced an increase in ratings when using colloquial as opposed to neutral language (Nodes 21 and 22). Notably, L2 speakers again saw no difference due to *speaker register* (Node 23). While their ratings were overall lower in the second stimulus than they had received in the first (Node 17), in neither instance did the use of colloquial language have any impact on ratings.

Therefore, although the benefits of colloquial register only occurred in the second stimulus for L1 speakers, the L2 female saw no benefit in any situation. For her, using colloquial language had no impact whatsoever on evaluations of *solidarity/dynamism*, indicating that she could not access the same benefits as those afforded to L1 speakers. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the L2 speaker did not receive significantly worse evaluations when using colloquial language, either; as far as ratings of *solidarity/dynamism* are concerned, the speaker simply did not stand to gain or lose anything from its use.

Whereas *speaker register* was only significant in one instance for females, it proved to be the most significant predictor for males:

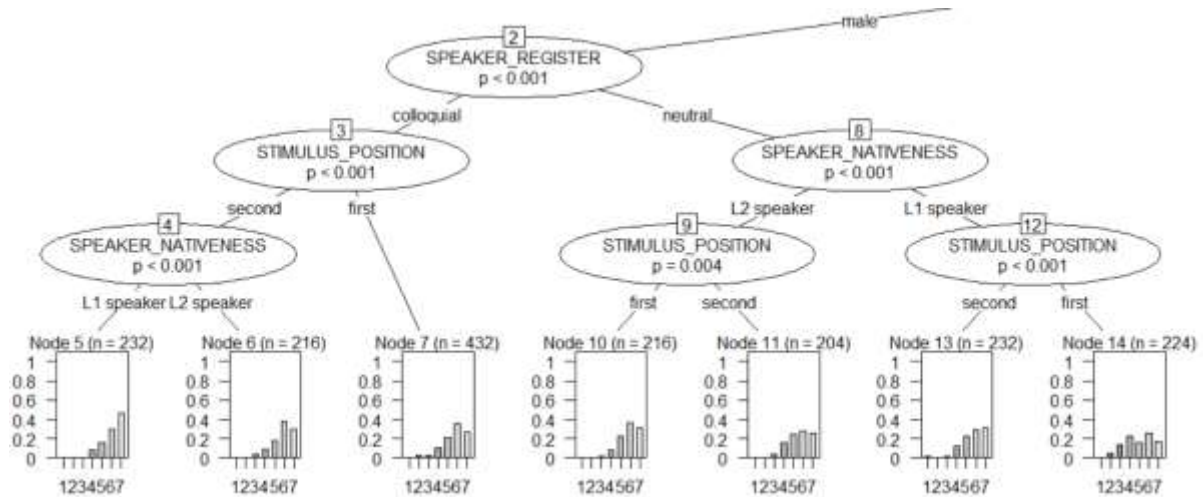


Figure 7: Solidarity/dynamism conditional inference tree, male gender

Beginning with the neutral register, the male L2 speaker continued the trend established by the female in receiving higher ratings in the first stimulus (Node 10) than the L1 speaker (Node 14), In the second stimulus, L1 speaker ratings demonstrated a marked increase (Node 13), again likely due to the comparison effect. The L2 speaker ratings (Node 11) declined slightly from those in the first stimulus (Node 10), but remained comparable to the L1 speaker (Node 13), albeit marginally lower.

In the colloquial register, *speaker nativeness* had no impact on ratings when the guise was presented first (Node 7). Even so, while this rating was relatively unchanged from the L2 speaker's neutral guise (Node 10), it demonstrated a marked increase from that of the L1 speaker (Node 14). The implication here is that the L1 speaker benefitted from using colloquial language, while the L2 speaker did not.

The second stimulus again showed the predicted jump in L1 speaker ratings as compared to the first (Node 5 vs. 7). These ratings were also higher than the neutral guise (Node 13), a result which reflects the increase in *solidarity/dynamism* expected from the literature (Giles & Billings 2004). The L2 speaker, on the other hand, saw no large change between the first and second stimulus (Nodes 7 and 6). The second stimulus does show a marginal increase in comparison to the neutral guise (Node 11). Although this increase is not as substantial as that experienced by the L1 speaker, it does demonstrate that colloquial language use did provide the male L2 speaker with a small degree of benefit.

The conclusion for the male L2 speaker is therefore slightly more positive than for the female. The increase in ratings of *solidarity/dynamism* for the male speaker, while small and only observable in the second stimulus, demonstrated at least some benefit. In contrast, the inclusion of colloquial language made no difference for the female L2 speaker. This difference according to *speaker gender* is perhaps a result of the increased access to covert prestige (Chapter 2) which males enjoy when employing informal language. Even so, this increase is quite small and certainly not proportional to that experienced by L1 speakers—L2 speakers simply do not seem to have access to the same benefits of *solidarity/dynamism* as L1 speakers. It should again be noted, however, that evaluations were not more negative in the colloquial guise, it simply did not have the positive effect as seen in L1 speakers.

4. Summary

Overall, the results of this section are mixed for L2 use of colloquial language. L2 speakers were found to be subject to the same *status* penalties as L1 speakers (perhaps even more so), but they did not reap the same benefits in terms of *solidarity/dynamism*, with the male seeing a small increase in ratings and the female seeing none. In short, L2 speakers face the same risks in terms of *status* and *solidarity/dynamism* when employing colloquial language, but do not seem to have access to the same level of benefits. In this sense, there does appear to be a small level of double standard applied to non-native use of colloquial language, but this risk does not reach the levels of backlash expected by Chapter 2's proponents of the double standard's existence. As far as the results in this section are concerned, the lack of benefits seems a bigger disadvantage than any tangible drawbacks.

IV. PERCEPTIONS OF CONTEXTUAL APPROPRIATENESS

One of the common fears cited in discussions of informal language use by L2 speakers is the difficulty of employing that language in the proper context, and the danger of using the language inappropriately. In order to assess whether L2 speakers are judged more leniently or harshly when using language inappropriate for a given context, the questionnaire asked participants to rate each guise according to its *appropriateness* in a formal context and an informal one. This section reports the findings from these ratings.

1. Formal Context

Participant answers were again analyzed using a conditional inference tree. The visualization for the *appropriateness* of stimuli in a formal context is presented in Figure 8:

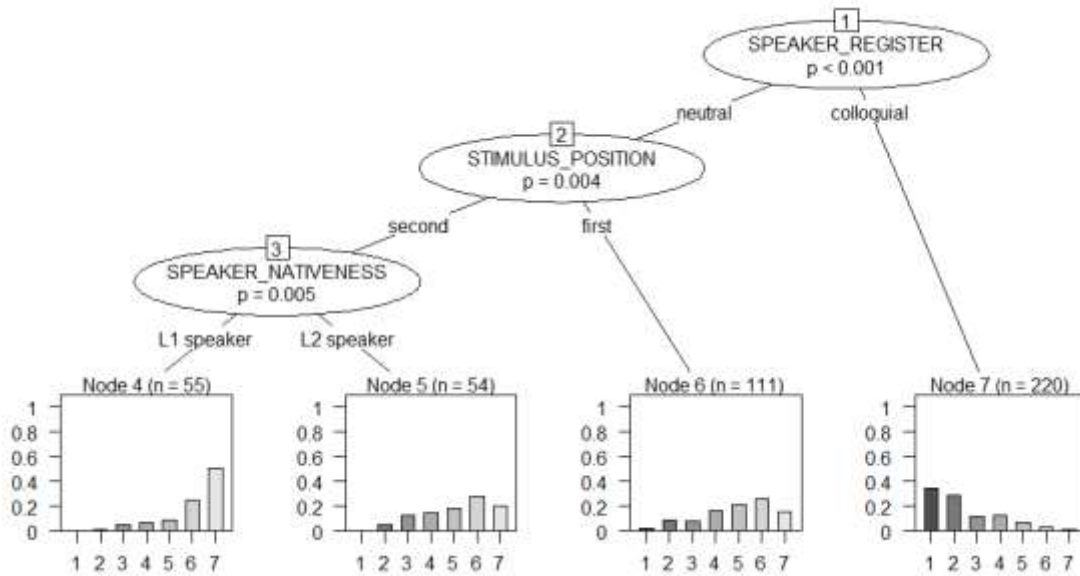


Figure 8: *Appropriateness in formal context* conditional inference tree

Speaker register demonstrated itself to be the most significant predictor in the formal context. This was to be expected; as is apparent from Node 7, the use of colloquial language in a formal setting was viewed as quite inappropriate, while neutral language (Nodes 4-6) was considered much more acceptable. Critically, *speaker nativeness* was not found to make a significant difference within the colloquial level of *speaker register*. This means that L2 speakers were judged no more leniently or harshly than L1 speakers when using colloquial language in an inappropriate context—they appear to be subject to the exact same penalties as L1 speakers.

In terms of the neutral stimulus, when presented first (Node 6), *speaker nativeness* once again had no significant effect. The language was seen as relatively acceptable when produced by both native and L2 speakers—the flatter distribution of responses (rather than a curve heavily skewed toward the positive end of the scale) is likely a result of the fact that the language of the

neutral guise represents a neutral, conversational register rather than an explicitly formal one. This language was interpreted as more or less acceptable in a formal context, although it is likely that a guise containing more expressly formal language would have received more positive ratings.

The more intriguing results, however, appear upon examining the ratings of the neutral guise when presented as the second stimulus. Evaluations of the neutral stimulus were overwhelmingly positive when the language was produced by L1 speakers (Node 4), with the conditional inference tree predicting over 50% of participants would rate the sample with a '7', whereas the number of ratings at that same level was predicted to be less than 20% when the neutral guise was produced first (Node 6). Section II.1 discussed how participants likely established baseline ratings of linguistic proficiency using the first stimulus, and it is probable that the same phenomenon is occurring here: when the colloquial guise appeared as the first stimulus, participants identified it as highly inappropriate in a formal environment, thereby setting a baseline of negative evaluations and causing the more appropriate neutral guise to be judged much more positively in comparison. But if this is the case, why does the use of neutral language by L2 speakers (Node 5) see only a comparatively marginal increase when presented second as opposed to first (Node 6)?

The answer to this question hints that listeners are perhaps, in fact, more critical of non-native than native use of colloquial language in inappropriate contexts. Because ratings of the second stimulus were likely a response to the baseline established in the first, an increased differential between the first and second stimuli indicate higher levels of disapproval of the first. The responses of Node 4 occurred after an L2 speaker used colloquial language in the first stimulus, and the highly positive reactions to the second stimulus suggest proportionately negative ones for the first. In contrast, when an L1 speaker used colloquial language in the first

stimulus, ratings of the second stimulus (Node 5) did not increase nearly as dramatically from those in Node 6. Therefore, it seems that participants must in fact have exhibited higher levels of disapproval for L2 use of colloquialisms in an inappropriate context, even if no significant difference was found for *speaker nativeness* in the colloquial guise. This disapproval may have occurred on a less conscious level than if *speaker nativeness* had interacted significantly with the colloquial register, and it should be emphasized that the predictions of Node 5 are overall still positive, but the disparity between the increase from Node 6 to Node 4 vs. that in Node 5 demonstrates that such disproportionate disapproval may exist after all.

2. Informal Context

The conditional inference tree for *appropriateness* in an informal context had a much higher classification accuracy at 51%. Figure 9 visualizes the results:

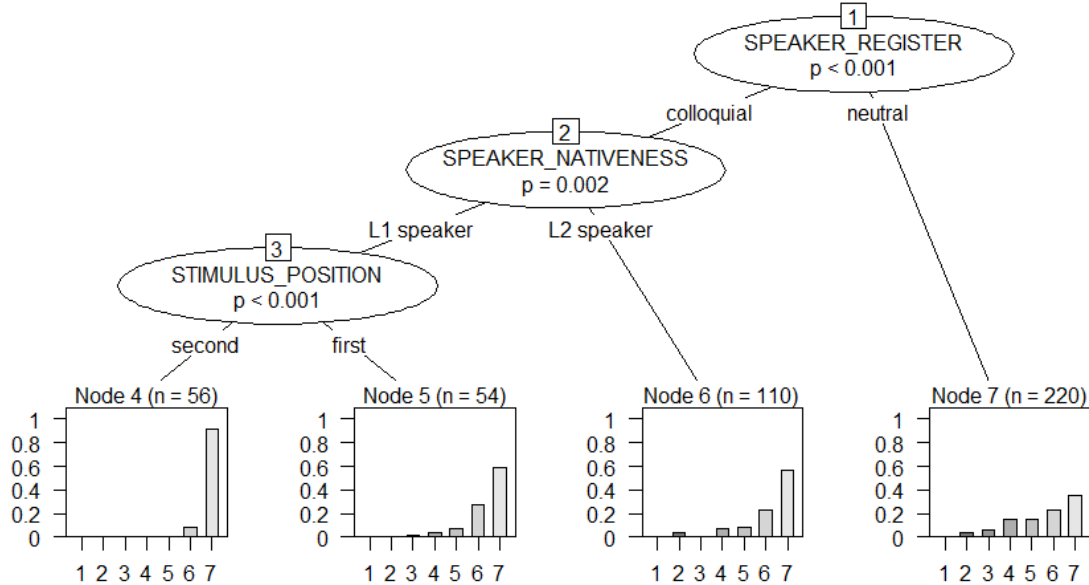


Figure 9: Appropriateness in informal context conditional inference tree

As was the case in the formal context, *speaker register* again proved to be the most significant predictor, with both L1 and L2 speakers receiving similar ratings in the neutral guise (Node 7). These ratings leaned toward the positive end of the scale, but the colloquial guise

(Nodes 4-6) received much higher ratings of *appropriateness*. Although these ratings were higher in the colloquial guise than the neutral one regardless of *speaker nativeness*, the predicted ratings of ‘1’, ‘2’, and ‘3’ in Node 6 indicate that some percentage of the participants, however small, nevertheless reacted negatively to L2 speaker production of colloquial language.

Stimulus position only proved to be a significant predictor for the L1 speaker colloquial guise. When presented as the first stimulus (Node 5), this guise received ratings of *appropriateness* largely comparable to L2 speakers (Node 6). When presented second, however, L1 speakers received overwhelmingly positive responses (Node 4). As above, these positive ratings demonstrate a reaction to a baseline set by the neutral guise, but the fact that L2 speakers do not benefit from a similar reaction suggests that they are not able to tap into the same benefits as L1 speakers. Nevertheless, they still receive positive ratings of *appropriateness* when using colloquial language in an informal context, meaning that L2 speakers stand to benefit from the language when used appropriately, albeit without reaping the same high level of rewards as L1 speakers.

3. Written responses

The written responses which participants gave in order to justify their ratings verify that they were making judgments primarily based on the register of the language produced by the speaker. Comments on the neutral guise tended to mention that the speaker used language appropriate for both situations:

(5) “*El lenguaje que utiliza es estándar y sirve para las dos situaciones.*”

(“The language which she uses is standard and works for both situations.”)
—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (neutral register)

As mentioned previously, the neutral guise was not intended to be formal, but rather neutral in nature. A small number of participants who heard this guise first commented on the

intermediate status of the register, referring to the language as colloquial but also recognizing that more or less formal language could be used for the contexts in question:

- (6) *“El lenguaje que usa la hablante es bastante informal aunque con los amigos se suele hablar incluso más informal. Sin embargo, el lenguaje que emplea para dirigirse a un policía no sería el más adecuado ya que le estaría hablando de una forma un poco ‘familiar’.”*

(“The language which the speaker uses is fairly informal, although one typically speaks even more informally among friends. However, the language which she employs in order to speak to the policeman wouldn’t be the most appropriate since she would be talking to him in a manner which is a bit ‘familiar’.”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (neutral register)

These comments to some extent explain the variability in ratings of *appropriateness*, particularly when occurring as the first stimulus such as Node 6 in Figure 8. Without having heard the colloquial guise first, some participants might have felt that more or less formal language was appropriate for the situation.

In terms of the colloquial guise, a majority of participants indicated in their written comments that they had based their decision off the colloquial language produced by the speaker. Of 220 participants, 154 specifically referenced colloquial language, and 69 of these did so when evaluating L2 speakers. Comments typically centered around the language’s suitability for an informal but not a formal context:

- (7) *“Su vocabulario es coloquial, por lo tanto, sería el adecuado entre amigos pero no en una explicación para la policía.”*

(“His vocabulary is colloquial, and therefore it would be appropriate among friends, but not in an explanation for the police.”)

—Evaluation of male L2 speaker (colloquial register)

Some participants specifically highlighted that the words were acceptable because although they were informal, they were not vulgar:

- (8) *“Su uso de la jerga más coloquial lo relaciono con un ambiente más familiar que formal, pero debido a que no usa palabras extremadamente vulgares, no lo he puntuado como muy poco adecuado en el ámbito del policía.”*

(“I relate his use of more colloquial slang more to a familiar situation than a formal one, but since he doesn’t use extremely vulgar words, I didn’t score it as highly inappropriate in the police context.”)

—Evaluation of male L2 speaker (colloquial register)

Indeed, as described in Chapter 3, the lexical items selected for this study were intended to be mildly-marked or marked in nature, which meant they would have a greater flexibility in acceptability than outright vulgar terms. Furthermore, words considered by Fitch (2011) to be vulgar were specifically omitted. Some participants, however, nevertheless found the words too crude for use in a formal context:

- (9) *“El hablante utiliza muchas palabras vulgares, lo cual para hablar entre amigos es aceptable y bastante normal, pero para hablar con la policía resulta demasiado vulgar, debería utilizar un lenguaje más correcto.”*

(“The speaker uses a lot of vulgar words, which for talking among friends is acceptable and pretty normal, but for speaking to the police seems too vulgar. She should use more correct language.”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (colloquial register)

Therefore, although participants by and large agreed that colloquial language was not the most appropriate choice in a formal context, participants held varying opinions on the extent to which it was inappropriate.

4. Summary

This section found that, for the most part, L1 and L2 speakers are not judged according to different standards in terms of the *appropriateness* of colloquial speech in formal or informal contexts. Colloquial speech was deemed inappropriate in the former and appropriate in the latter regardless of *speaker nativeness*.

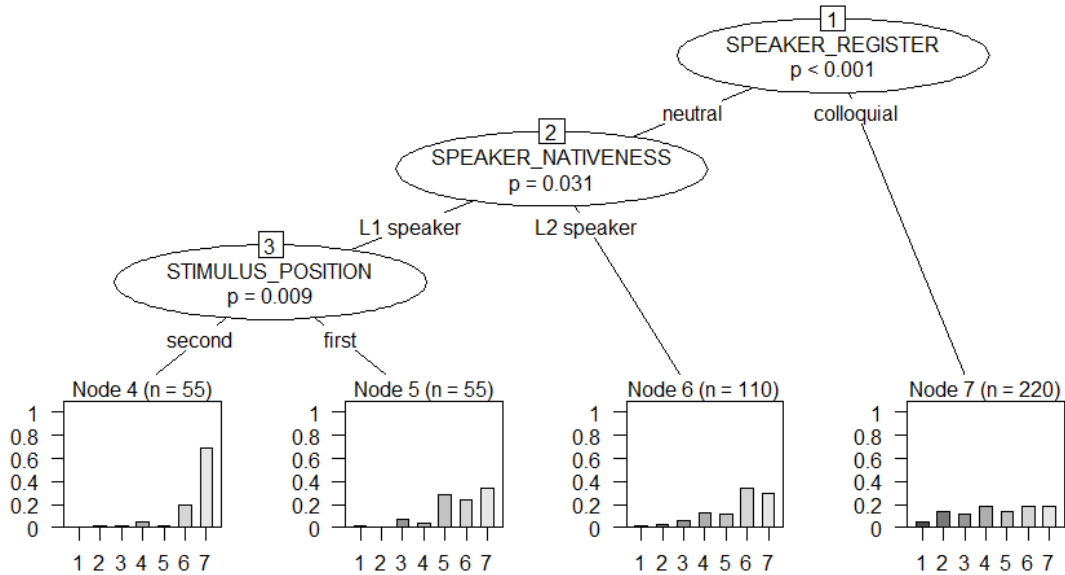
The reception of contextually-appropriate language in the second stimulus, however, demonstrated that L2 speakers do in fact exhibit some disadvantages in comparison to L1 speakers. Higher ratings of native speech when occurring second indicated first that non-natives using colloquial language face more disapproval in a formal context, even if this disapproval is unconscious. Second, it appears that L2 speakers don't have access to the full range of benefits provided by colloquial speech in informal contexts. In summary, L2 speakers on the whole are held to the same standards as L1 speakers in terms of *appropriateness*, although they face slightly exaggerated risks without having access to the same degree of rewards. Some of the concerns voiced in Chapter 2 therefore seem well-founded: L2 speakers are not extended any special leniency in employing language inappropriately, and consequently must exercise extra caution in ensuring they choose language appropriate to the environment.

V. PERCEPTIONS OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR L2 SPEAKERS

Participants were asked to evaluate whether the specific language presented in the guise was appropriate for use by an L2 speaker. The purpose was first to explore whether neutral or colloquial language was deemed more appropriate as a linguistic target, and second, to see whether this attitude changed depending on who was providing the example of the target. That is, a participant might imagine colloquial language to be an inappropriate or inaccessible target for L2 speakers when that language was produced by an L1 speaker, but view it as much more feasible when actually hearing it from an L2 speaker.

1. Numeric Results

The same procedure was followed for analyzing the data in this section. A conditional inference tree was generated, with a classification accuracy of 31%. A visualization is presented in Figure 10:



Speaker register proved itself to be the most significant predictor of *appropriateness* for use by a non-native. The neutral register (Nodes 4-6) received more positive ratings of *appropriateness* than the colloquial one (Node 7). The even distribution of responses in Node 7, with the model assigning ratings ‘2’ through ‘7’ at 10-20% each, demonstrates that the views of participants varied widely: roughly an equal number of participants felt positively, negatively, or somewhere in between toward the use of colloquial language. Without any particular consensus among participants, it seems that attitudes toward the use of colloquial language by L2 speakers depends largely on personal opinion.

For the neutral register, a pattern emerges similar to that seen in Section IV’s exploration of *contextual appropriateness*. The neutral register was considered appropriate, roughly to the same

degree regardless of *speaker nativeness* (Nodes 5 and 6), except when the L1 speaker employing the neutral register was presented second (Node 4). In this case, the language was considered much more appropriate for use by L2 speakers. As explained in Section IV.1, this likely indicates an implicit disapproval of non-native use of colloquialisms in the first stimulus. Therefore, although *speaker nativeness* does not make a significant difference within the colloquial register, it seems that participants nevertheless were more critical of the language when used by L2 speakers, and found the neutral language produced afterwards by the L1 speaker to be preferable.

2. Written Responses

Many of the written comments provided in regard to the colloquial guise indicated that the use of colloquial language was acceptable independent of the speaker's L1, on the condition that the language was employed in the correct context:

- (10) *“Me parece adecuado que utilice las palabras que emplea en la grabación siempre y cuando sepa en qué contexto puede o no utilizarlas y sabiendo diferenciar los tipos de diferentes situaciones que se pueden dar, donde es más correcto utilizar un lenguaje u otro. En un ámbito más coloquial, un lenguaje diario se entendería a la perfección.”*

(“It seems appropriate [for an L2 speaker] to use the words of the recording so long as he knows in which contexts he can or cannot use them, as well as knowing how to distinguish between the different types of situations that can occur, where using one type of language or another is more correct. In a more colloquial context, day-to-day language would be understood perfectly well.”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (colloquial register)

In the previous section, it was theorized that the wide range of ratings seen in Node 7 of Figure 10 stemmed from the wide variety of different viewpoints on L2 use of colloquial language. (10) demonstrates that some participants saw context as the deciding factor, and therefore may have marked more neutral ratings as did the comment's writer, who answered near the middle of the scale with a '5'.

Another group of participants responded that colloquial language was not only acceptable for an L2 speaker, but necessary in order to reach a full level of proficiency in the L2:

- (11) *“Creo que para aprender una lengua a la perfección debes conocer todas las palabras que puedas para poder adecuarte a la jerga del posible futuro hablante con el que puedas mantener una conversación. Nunca está de más saber.”*

(“I think that in order to learn a language perfectly, you should get to know all the words you can in order to adapt to the jargon of possible future speakers with whom you could hold a conversation. It never hurts to know more.”)

—Evaluation of female L1 speaker (colloquial register)

Others elaborated on this viewpoint, stating that the colloquial language used by the speaker was in fact more representative of real speech than the standardized norm typically taught in foreign language classrooms:

- (12) *“Sí que me parece adecuado, porque normalmente las lenguas son enseñadas desde el punto de vista más técnico y culto, cuando realmente el registro más frecuente es el coloquial.”*

(“It does seem appropriate to me [for a non-native to use colloquial language], because normally languages are taught from a more technical and educated point of view, when the colloquial register is really more frequent.”)

—Evaluation of male L2 speaker (colloquial register)

(11) and (12) reflect the attitudes in Chapter 2 that a learner who does not control colloquial language may not possess the complete set of linguistic tools necessary to function in a real-life scenario. Some even remarked upon the impressive effect hearing such language from an L2 speaker would have:

- (13) *“Si un hablante no nativo las utilizara demostraría un gran dominio de la lengua al conocer dichas expresiones (siempre que fuera en un registro informal).”*

(“If a non-native speaker used [the colloquial words in this sample] it would demonstrate great mastery of the language, as they know the aforementioned expressions (as long as it were in an informal register).”)

—Evaluation of male L1 speaker (colloquial register)

Another common view among participants was that although learners should feel free to learn colloquialisms, they should first reach a certain level of mastery of a more formal register:

- (14) *“Si es bastante fluido en el idioma me parecería adecuado, pero si aún tiene dificultades con el nivel básico no creo que sea adecuado aventurarse con el ‘slang’.”*

(“If [the speaker] is fairly fluent in the language, I would find it appropriate, but if he still has difficulties with the basic level, I don’t think it would be appropriate to risk using ‘slang.’”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (colloquial register)

Although participants such as those above cited the potential benefits of non-native use of colloquial language, others viewed it less favorably. Many participants felt that a standard norm would be a more appropriate linguistic target, citing rationales similar to those raised in Chapter 2. Some participants recommended that the language be learned solely for receptive purposes (*“Que las conociera pero que no las utilizara”*, “He should know [the words] but not use them.”), while others raised concerns regarding the dangers of misunderstanding its precise meaning (*“...es más difícil que el extranjero entienda perfectamente el significado de las palabras y las use de modo erróneo”*, “It might be more difficult for a foreigner to understand the meaning of the words and they could use them incorrectly.”), as well as the limited application and short lifespan of colloquial vocabulary:

- (15) *“...El vocabulario utilizado en la grabación también es más propio de los jóvenes, y está determinado por las fugaces modas, no sería tan correcto que un [no] nativo aprendiese este vocabulario ya que incluso podría dejar de utilizarse en un futuro.”*

(“...The vocabulary utilized in the recording is also more characteristic of young people and determined by brief fads. It wouldn’t be very correct for a non-native to learn this vocabulary since it could even stop being used in the future.”)

—Evaluation of male L2 speaker (colloquial register)

One participant, assuming that language learners’ motivation would primarily be instrumental (see Chapter 2) in nature, surmised that colloquial language would be harmful in the pursuit of this goal:

- (16) *“Si una persona se dispone a aprender español, no resulta demasiado adecuado este tipo de lenguaje, ya que es demasiado informal y probablemente la persona que está aprendiendo el idioma sea para algún trabajo en el que lo requieran.”*

(“If a person is resolved to learn Spanish, this type of language is not particularly appropriate, since it is too informal and the person who’s learning the language probably is doing so for some job where it’s required.”)

—Evaluation of male L1 speaker (colloquial register)

Still others argued that, in spite of any potential advantages, colloquial language is itself incorrect and it would be a disadvantageous model to imitate:

- (17) *“Quizás estaría bien que un hablante no nativo hablara como nosotros lo hacemos, pero eso sería enseñarle mal nuestro idioma, hacerle hablar el castellano mal desde el principio, y eso creo que no sería bueno.”*

(“Maybe it would be good for a non-native speaker to speak like we do, but that would mean teaching him our language poorly, making him speak Spanish badly from the beginning, and I don’t think that would be good.”)

—Evaluation of female L1 speaker (colloquial register)

A very small group of participants who heard the colloquial guise from an L1 speaker denied that L2 speakers would ever produce such language (*“Un hablante no nativo no utiliza palabras coloquiales”*, “An L2 speaker doesn’t use colloquial words.”), claiming that colloquialisms are not taught in a classroom environment (*“...a un hablante no nativo no le enseñan este tipo de palabras, utiliza palabras más cultas”*, “...they don’t teach these kinds of words to L2 speakers, they use more educated words.”). These attitudes implicitly reflect the double standard posited in Chapter 2 in that these participants view colloquial language as incompatible with an L2 identity. Other participants were more overt in their support of this viewpoint:

- (18) *“...no es adecuado hablar con este lenguaje, puesto que, como he dicho antes, solamente es hablado en un castellano coloquial, e, incluso me atrevería a decir, nativo, debido a la mala costumbre de uso de estos términos.”*

(“...it’s not appropriate to speak with this language since, as I said earlier, it’s only spoken in Spanish that is colloquial, and I’d even dare to say native, due to the bad habit of using these terms.”)

—Evaluation of male L1 speaker (colloquial register)

This participant denies the possibility that an L2 speaker would use such language by proposing—albeit tentatively—that it is only produced by L1 speakers. Such a statement provides an example of the conventional folk knowledge which steers language learners away from producing colloquial language.

Another participant professes a similar viewpoint, although they are very self-aware about the covert nature of such a double standard. After hearing the colloquial guise from an L1 speaker and rating the *appropriateness* of the language for an L2 speaker with a ‘2’, they wrote the following statement:

(19) *“Me crea una contradicción, ya que en caso de ser un hablante no nativo creo que no sería adecuado que usara este vocabulario. Y me hace pensar que existen una serie de prejuicios de los cuales no nos damos cuenta.”*

(“For me, [the use of this language by an L2 speaker] creates a contradiction, since in the case of being a non-native speaker, I don’t think it would be appropriate to use this vocabulary. And it makes me think that a series of prejudices exist which we are not conscious of.”)

—Evaluation of female L1 speaker (colloquial register)

The participant’s statement implies that, while this language would be inappropriate for an L2 speaker, it would in fact be perfectly acceptable when coming from an L1 speaker. As evidenced by (20) and (21), other participants acknowledged this double standard, but claimed that even if they found the use of colloquial language by non-natives as strange, they would not view it negatively:

(20) *“Creo que algunas palabras que usa son específicas de los nativos, como ‘tío’, ‘curro’, ‘mola’... Pero no me parece mal que las use, sólo me resulta extraño que las conozca.”*

(“I think that some words that he uses are specific to L1 speakers, like ‘tío’, ‘curro’, ‘mola’...But I don’t think it’s bad that he uses them, it just seems strange that he knows them.”)

—Evaluation of male L2 speaker (colloquial register)

- (21) *“Hay algunas palabras que quizá resultarían extrañas en la boca de un hablante no nativo, pero podrían ser utilizadas perfectamente.”*

(“There are some words that maybe would come off as strange in the mouth of a non-native speaker, but they could be used perfectly fine.”)

—Evaluation of male L2 speaker (colloquial register)

In terms of the responses to the neutral register, these too reflected the variety of attitudes toward non-native use of colloquial register. Some participants responded that they felt the speaker would benefit from incorporating more colloquial language:

- (22) *“Demuestra su gran adquisición de vocabulario, pero mostraría un nivel mayor si utilizase expresiones coloquiales.”*

(“[The speaker] demonstrates her great acquisition of vocabulary, but she would show a higher level if she used colloquial expressions.”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (neutral register)

Notably, this comment was written in response to the first stimulus, meaning that the participant had not yet heard the colloquial guise and therefore had in no way been primed to expect the occurrence of colloquial language. Even so, the participant felt that the L2 speaker’s speech would improve if she used more informal vocabulary. Another participant voiced the same opinion, also in response to the first stimulus:

- (23) *“Me gustaría que utilizara las palabras típicas de España.”*

(“I’d like her to use words that are typical of Spain.”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (neutral register)

This participant was even more specific, indicating that the speaker’s speech would be more appropriate if it included regionally-appropriate vocabulary.

While (22) and (23) demonstrate that some participants felt that the L2 samples could have been improved with colloquial vocabulary despite not having been primed to think so, other participants who had heard the colloquial guise first commented on its absence in the second stimulus:

- (24) *“Adecuado ya que no comete ningún error pero sí que falta un poco de entusiasmo al hablar y palabras y adjetivos más coloquiales.”*

(“[The specific language used by the speaker is] appropriate since she doesn’t commit any errors, but she is lacking a bit of enthusiasm as well as more colloquial adjectives.”)

—Evaluation of female L2 speaker (neutral register)

This criticism in the second stimulus was not just leveled at L2 speakers, but at L1 speakers as well:

- (25) *“Emplea un vocabulario muy natural, equivalente al de un nativo (si es que no lo es) aunque podría utilizar palabras más coloquiales, que en este caso darían más interés y color a la conversación.”*

(“She employs a very natural vocabulary, equivalent to that of a non-native speaker (if she isn’t one in the first place), although she could use more colloquial words, which in this case would give the conversation more interest and color.”)

—Evaluation of female L1 speaker (neutral register)

This participant had heard the colloquial guise produced by an L2 speaker as the first stimulus, and evidently felt that the L1 speaker could have used some of the more colloquial language demonstrated by the L2 speaker.

On the other hand, some participants reacted just the opposite to the neutral guise after hearing colloquial speech from an L2 speaker in the first stimulus. Their comments praised the language used by the L1 speaker in the neutral guise:

- (26) *“Habla correctamente sin cometer fallos de pronunciación ni utiliza palabras de registro informal.”*

(“He speaks correctly without committing pronunciation errors, nor does he use words of an informal register.”)

—Evaluation of male L1 speaker (neutral register)

This participant’s evaluation of the speaker as speaking “correctly” and without “words of an informal register” illustrates the highly positive evaluation of Node 4 in Figure 10. Participants such as this one evidently felt that the neutral language used by the L1 speaker was far more appropriate than the colloquial language produced by the L2 speaker in the first stimulus. The strong endorsement of the neutral register when presented second communicates implicit disapproval of the colloquial language used by the L2 speaker in the first stimulus.

In sum, the written comments in this section reflect the wide distribution of ratings predicted by the conditional inference tree in Node 7 of Figure 10: some participants viewed the use of colloquial language by L2 speakers as appropriate, others took the opposite view, and still others struggled to reconcile the numerous conflicting factors at play in making such a judgment. It is evident that the judgment was not an easy one, nor did participants reach a widespread consensus, with personal opinions differing substantially on the matter.

3. Summary

Overall, this section demonstrated the heterogeneous attitudes toward the use of colloquial language by L2 speakers. The numeric results indicated that these views vary wildly, spanning the whole range from highly appropriate to very inappropriate and everywhere in between. The written comments similarly showcased a wide diversity of opinions. Participants echoed arguments regarding the benefits and drawbacks of colloquial language use seen in Chapter 2, and many fell somewhere in between. In particular, many participants remarked that the use of colloquial language didn’t pose any real problems, but that it nevertheless sounded strange coming from an L2 speaker.

As for the question of whether participants' judgments were affected by actually hearing an L2 speaker produce colloquial language vs. a hypothetical imagining of its use by them, the quantitative analysis found evidence of some small bias against production by L2 speakers. Even though *speaker nativeness* was not found to be a significant predictor of *appropriateness* in the colloquial register, the higher ratings assigned to the neutral register when produced second by an L1 speaker suggest that hearing an L2 speaker produce colloquialisms in the first stimulus was in some way disconcerting: whether or not participants agreed that the production of colloquialisms by L2 speakers was acceptable, there was a strong leaning towards neutral register being a more appropriate target.

The widespread agreement in ratings that neutral language was highly acceptable does support the assertions made throughout Chapter 2 insofar as the neutral register being a much safer target for L2 speakers. On the other hand, the results of this section also demonstrated that this does not result from unilateral condemnation of colloquial language use. The expressed attitudes varied substantially between individuals, and many participants went so far as to advocate for colloquial language use by native speakers. That neutral register is a safer target should be unsurprising given its overall versatility; more interesting is the fact that the use of colloquial language is not *per se* discouraged by L1 speakers.

VI. FACTORS EXCLUDED FROM CONDITIONAL INFERENCE TREES

The previous sections in this chapter discuss the effects of *speaker register*, *nativeness*, and *gender*, as well as *stimulus position* on the dependent variables. During the course of the investigation, two other predictors were recorded, but these were eventually discarded from the final analysis for reasons which will be detailed in this section.

The first of these predictors was *tolerance*. As described in Chapter 3, participants were provided with six questions during the debriefing session as a general measure of attitude toward foreign language learners. These questions asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements such as “*Cuando tengo que hablar con gente extranjera que no controla bien el español, me siento frustrado*” (“When I have to talk with foreigners who don’t speak Spanish well, I feel frustrated”) and “*Me gusta aprender sobre culturas no españolas*” (“I like learning about non-Spanish cultures”). The intention was to correct for skewed ratings from participants who indicated higher or lower levels of *tolerance*—for example, participants judged to have particularly low levels of *tolerance* may simply have rated all non-native samples negatively, while the inverse could be true for abnormally high *tolerance* scores. The six *tolerance* questions collapsed into two dimensions, as shown by a principal component analysis.

The second predictor not included in the final modeling was *setting control*. Some participant groups experienced variations in the testing environment which may have negatively impacted their ratings: one group was interrupted by a fire alarm, one had an unexpected shortage of headphones which led to some participants needing to share, and one group performed the questionnaire online rather than in person. The binary predictor *setting control* was therefore created in order to distinguish between those participants to whom the questionnaire was administered in more and less controlled experimental conditions.

The effect of each of these predictors was assessed using a linear model, with *rating* as the dependent variable and each of the two *tolerance* principal components as well as *setting control* as independent variables. The resulting model was highly significant ($p < 2.2e-16$), but the small adjusted R^2 value (0.01695) indicated minimal effect size. For this reason, *tolerance* and *setting control* were excluded from the conditional inference trees above. It was also hoped that removing these predictors—neither of which directly addressed the experimental questions of

this dissertation—would facilitate the comprehension of the conditional inference trees, which as the reader has seen, grew to be fairly complex even with just four predictors.

VII. DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS

The final analytical section of this chapter will address the two questions participants were asked to answer as part of the debriefing process. These questions were asked after the presentation of all experimental stimuli, and the intention was to directly elicit participant attitudes toward and experience with the production of colloquial language by L2 speakers.

1. Opinions on Use of Colloquial Language by L2 Speakers

This question directly asked participants to describe their attitude toward the use of colloquial language by L2 speakers, including whether they found such language use to be impressive, strange, or a less preferable alternative to more formal language. This question was similar to that posed in Section V, but the debriefing directly drew attention to colloquial language, whereas the question in Section V simply asked participants to consider the speaker's choice of words, which in some samples happened to be colloquial in nature. It was hoped that a more direct question asked during the debriefing phase would encourage deeper reflection on the part of the participant, especially in light of the various speech samples they had heard.

Of the 216 participants who answered the question, 186 indicated that they approved of colloquial language use to one extent or another, while only 28 directly stated that they felt such language was inappropriate for L2 speakers. This disparity in numbers must be taken with a grain of salt, as some participants may have been hesitant to openly advocate for a linguistic double standard even if they felt one consciously or unconsciously. Yet, it nevertheless suggests that the participant group approved of such language use, at least in theoretical terms. Table 5

further demonstrates that whether the participant had actually heard an L2 speaker produce colloquial language in one of the experimental stimuli did not affect their attitudes toward its use:

Table 5

Debriefing question #1 opinions according to L1 of colloquial guise

Response	Colloquial guise produced by L1 speaker	Colloquial guise produced by L2 speaker
In favor of L2 use of colloquial speech	94	92
Against L2 use of colloquial speech	12	16

A chi-squared test for independence verified the lack of significant correlation ($\chi^2 = 0.30814$, $df = 1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.5788$). This result corroborates those of Section V, whose analysis found that judgments on the appropriateness of colloquial language for L2 speakers was unaffected by *speaker nativeness*. Although those who expressed disapproval in Table 5 were certainly in the minority, the lack of unanimity potentially explains the conflicting results discussed throughout Chapter 2. These numbers emphasize the necessity of large sample sizes in language attitudes studies, a factor which this study attempted to take into account with the large number of subjects recruited for participation.

Because this question mirrored that in Section V, responses tended to fall along similar lines. The most common response among participants alluded to the incongruity of colloquial speech in the mouth of an L2 speaker, although in most cases this surprise was not a negative one:

- (27) *“Cuando escucho a hablantes no nativos diciendo ese tipo de palabras me choca mucho porque es raro, pero también me parece muy gracioso y divertido en el buen sentido.”*

(“When I hear L2 speakers saying these types of words it surprises me because it’s strange, but I also think it’s funny and entertaining.”)

The use of colloquial language may be jarring due to its flouting of expectation, but this does not necessarily imply a negative reaction. Participants also justified its use through its ubiquity in actual speech:

- (28) *“Realmente, esas palabras se encuentran dentro del léxico español para llevarla a la práctica, ya sea de manera oral o escrita, aunque muchas veces depende a quién le quieras transmitir el mensaje y el lenguaje que debes de utilizar. Así que, sí, estoy de acuerdo con que todas las personas que tengan acceso al aprendizaje de cualquier lengua extranjera utilicen jergas, ya que en el caso contrario sería como una especie de exclusión social mediante la lingüística.”*

(“Really, these words are found in the Spanish dictionary in order to put them into practice, whether orally or in writing, although it often depends on who you want to transmit the message to and the language which you should use. So yes, I agree that everyone who has access to learning any foreign language can use slang, since in the opposite case it would be like a type of linguistic social exclusion.”)

This participant explicitly addresses the potential existence of a double standard, stating that the same language should be available to everyone. Other participants echoed this claim:

- (29) *“El uso de la jerga coloquial está estandarizado en casi todos los hábitos. Sería muy hipócrita por mi parte que yo, una persona que utiliza la jerga coloquial casi de continuo impidiese que otras personas, da igual extranjeras o no, utilizasen esta misma jerga en las mismas situaciones.”*

(“The use of colloquial slang is standardized in almost every environment. It would be very hypocritical on my part for me, a person who uses colloquial slang almost constantly, to stop other people from using that same slang in the same situations, whether or not they are foreigners.”)

As seen throughout previous sections, participants did not all follow this policy of unbiased judgment, but comments such as (29) suggest that these differences in judgment were, at least for some participants, unconscious in nature.

In addition to advocating for linguistic equality, participants made frequent reference to the necessity of colloquial language knowledge for complete understanding of the foreign language. Interestingly, 19 participants who made this sort of comment had heard colloquial speech produced by an L2 speaker, as opposed to only 8—less than half as many—who had heard the L1 speaker in the colloquial guise. Perhaps participants hearing the language from an L1 speaker were more likely to classify it as an unnecessary adornment, while those who heard it from an L2 speaker more carefully considered the language’s potential value. Whatever the explanation, these comments mirrored the sentiments expressed in Section V regarding the importance of controlling colloquial language in order to thrive in a foreign environment. (30), written by a participant who chose to respond in Catalan, provides an example:

- (30) *“Pense que és necessari conèixer els diferents registres de cada llengua, perquè això vol dir que presenta un domini pràcticament alt. Si només ens limitarem a parlar d'una manera formal, ens costaria entendre i adaptar-nos al moment en què vivim. Per exemple, quan aprenem anglès i eixim a l'estranger desconeixem com parlar sense sonar ‘repipi’. Això és perquè sabem parlar un anglès de llibre que ni els propis nadius parlen. Per tant, és un problema limitar-se a parlar només de manera formal.”*

(“I think it’s necessary to know the different registers of every language, because that means that you demonstrate a high level of mastery. If we only limit ourselves to speaking formally, it’s more difficult to understand and adapt ourselves to the present moment. For example, when we learn English and travel abroad we don’t know how to talk without sounding ‘pretentious.’ This is because we know how to speak a textbook-English which not even L1 speakers themselves speak. For that reason, limiting oneself to speaking only formally is a problem.”)

This participant draws upon their own experience in order to state the drawbacks of not controlling a full range of L2 registers. Other participants pointed to more direct benefits, including how the use of such language indicates a higher level of linguistic proficiency:

- (31) *“Personalmente, opino que me impresiona ver cuando un hablante no nativo utiliza palabras de la jerga coloquial. Eso me da a entender que conocen bien la lengua, ya que, lo primero que se aprende en una lengua es el registro estándar. Cuando adquieres más conocimientos saber ampliar y utilizar diferentes registros, siempre dependiendo del*

contexto en el que se hable. El buen conocimiento de una lengua, para mí, es cuando el hablante, nativo o no nativo, sabe cambiar de registro y utilizar el registro adecuado en el momento adecuado.”

(“Personally, I think that it impresses me when a non-native speaker uses words from colloquial speech. This makes me think they know the language well, since the first thing you learn in a language is the standard register. Once you acquire more knowledge, you know how to widen and use different registers, always depending on the context in which they are spoken. Good knowledge of a language, for me, is when the speaker—native or not—knows how to change register and use the appropriate register at the appropriate time.”)

While the analyses of Section II did not find that the use of colloquial language had a direct, measurable effect on evaluations of linguistic proficiency, this comment demonstrates that the ability to successfully change registers is nevertheless seen as a mark of increased ability in the L2. Furthermore, some participants viewed colloquial language as a motivating factor which would encourage learners to accelerate their acquisition process more quickly:

- (32) *“Creo que si una persona no nativa habla de manera más coloquial le va a ayudar a soltarse en el idioma ya que no es algo tan normal y le puede llamar más la atención y por tanto aprenderla antes. No creo que sea algo raro, sino algo positivo.”*

(“I think that if a non-native person speaks more colloquially, it will help them loosen up in the language, since it’s something irregular and it could make them more interested and therefore learn the language faster. I don’t think [colloquial language use] is something strange, but rather something positive.”)

This recognition of learner interest in colloquial language reflects the widespread motivation cited in Chapter 2: many students are simply interested in colloquial language for curiosity’s sake, and not necessarily out of any instrumental or integrative motivation (Chapter 2). While not all learners may be influenced by these motivations, participants drew attention to each of them in turn:

- (33) *“Estoy totalmente de acuerdo en que se aprenda un nivel coloquial ya que, si se quiere aprender un idioma para poder relacionarse con la gente de a pie, se tiene que aprender expresiones de dicho idioma. En cambio, si el objetivo es aprender un idioma para poder*

dar conferencias en la lengua de los asistentes, está claro que es inútil aprender la jerga coloquial. Pero para el resto es muy útil aprender un registro más bajo.”

(“I completely agree with learning a colloquial level since, if you want to learn a language in order to interact with people on the street, you have to learn expressions from that language. On the other hand, if the objective is to learn a language in order to be able to give conference talks in the language of those attending, it’s clearly useless to learn colloquial slang. But for the rest, it’s very useful to learn a lower register.”)

The above comment clearly sums up the dichotomy of instrumental vs. integrative motivations. It does not take into account that a learner may want to use the language for both purposes, but it also does not presume that either one is more common. Other participants, however, felt that regardless of learner motivations, a low-level learner’s number one priority is to be understood, and that colloquial language is not the most efficient pathway to this goal:

- (34) *“Creo que sí deberían limitarse a una forma de hablar más formal, a menos que tengan mucho conocimiento de la lengua. Digo esto porque un hablante no nativo de una lengua ‘x’, pongamos el español, que sigue aprendiendo a hablar dicha lengua (recalco que de mi juicio excluyo a gente con mucho conocimiento de la lengua), la aprende con fines comunicativos, es decir, para comunicarse con el mayor número de hablantes posibles de esta lengua (digo esto debido a la existencia de dialectos). Para ello, lo más efectivo, y a la vez convencional, es aprender un modelo estándar, o al menos, aceptado, y permisivo, de la misma.”*

(“I think they should limit themselves to a more formal way of speaking, unless they have considerable knowledge of the language. I say this because a non-native speaker of language ‘x’, let’s say Spanish, who continues learning to speak that language (I stress that this judgment excludes people with a high level of language knowledge), learns it with communicative ends, that is, to speak with the largest number of speakers of that language as is possible (I say this due to the existence of dialects). For this purpose, the most effective method—and at the same time conventional one—is to learn a standard model, or at least accepted and permissive, of that language.”)

For this participant, colloquial language would be appropriate for a higher-level speaker, but lower-level ones would be better served by a linguistic target which is more widely

applicable. This attitude of encouraging learners to first acquire a formal register before moving on to a colloquial one was seen repeatedly in Section V, and again in the present section:

- (35) *“Considero que primero es necesario que una persona no nativa aprenda a hablar correctamente, y una vez introducida en la lengua que está aprendiendo, terminará usando dichas coletillas que aun así siguen sin ser correctas.”*

(“I consider it necessary for a non-native person to first learn to speak correctly, and once they’ve been introduced to the language they’re learning, they’ll end up using the mentioned slang, even though it’s still not exactly correct.”)

Rather than acknowledging colloquial language as characterizing a different register than formal speech, this participant classifies it as incorrect. Such a prescriptive attitude was seen among several participants:

- (36) *“Sinceramente bajo mi punto de vista, el empleo de la jerga coloquial por parte de no nativos es síntoma de falta de estudio del idioma y el relacionarse con personas de bajo nivel.”*

(“Sincerely, from my point of view, the use of colloquial slang by L2 speakers is a symptom of a lack of study of the language and of interacting with people of a low level.”)

Like in (35), the participant who responded in (36) did not see knowledge of colloquial language as evidence of increased linguistic proficiency, but rather as a negative consequence of learning from people who do not employ the prestige variant.

The final category of comments worth mentioning are those produced by L2 speakers of Spanish. As discussed in Chapter 3, a small number of participants were exchange students visiting from other countries. While these students were omitted from the numerical analysis, their answers nevertheless were recorded and shed some light on the issue. In response to the debriefing question discussed throughout this section, one participant in particular commented that they themselves struggled with this debate in their own use of Spanish:

- (37) *“Como yo soy extranjera, he pensando [sic] mucho sobre eso. Me siento muy raro usando palabras como esas, porque no estoy segura en la lengua. Pero si yo pienso en mi lengua materna, que es el alemán y los extranjeros que usan palabras coloquiales como esas, no me resulta muy raro, si no bueno, que ellos intentan hablar como nativos.”*

(“Since I’m a foreigner, I have thought a lot about this. I feel very strange using words like those mentioned, because I’m not confident in the language. But if I think about my mother tongue, which is German, and the foreigners who use colloquial words like these, it doesn’t seem very strange to me. Instead, it seems good to me that they try to talk like L1 speakers”)

This participant approves of L2 learners of her native language using colloquial terms, but says that she feels strange using such language in her own L2. This indicates that she has knowledge of such words but is unsure about whether or not to employ them. She does not attribute this insecurity to a linguistic double standard, instead citing her lack of linguistic proficiency, but her response does demonstrate that the research questions of this dissertation involve very real concerns for second language learners.

To sum up the results of this section, the majority of participants’ responses indicated approval of colloquial language use by L2 speakers, regardless of whether or not they had heard an experimental stimulus showcasing its use by an L2 speaker. Even among those participants in favor of its use by L2 speakers, there was a wide variety of opinions as to its appropriateness, with some recommending that learners first master the formal register, and others viewing it as an essential part of the language learning process. A large number of participants remarked that hearing such language from an L2 speaker would be strange, but this surprise did not always implicate a negative reaction. Those participants opposed to colloquial language use cited factors such as prescriptive norms regarding ‘correct’ language use, the inefficiency of learning a register not suited to all contexts, and the assumption that learner motivations are typically instrumental.

2. Participant Anecdotes of Encounters with L2 Speakers Employing Colloquial Language

The second question in the debriefing portion of the questionnaire asked participants to describe, if possible, an anecdote in which they experienced an L2 Spanish speaker using colloquial language. They were further asked to detail their reaction, as well as the specific words which got their attention.²⁴ Of the 212 participants who responded to the question, 72 stated that they were unable to provide a suitable anecdote. Three claimed that they were actually more cognizant of times when L2 speech had been excessively formal rather than informal:

- (38) *“En realidad, lo contrario, los casos que conozco son de personas que utilizan una lengua muy elevada en momentos que no lo necesitan directamente.”*

(“Actually, the opposite, the cases which I know are of people who use very fancy language in moments when they don’t directly need it.”)

These comments, although few in number, hint at the dangers of inadequate control of informal registers in an L2. A majority of participants, however, were able to provide relevant anecdotes, such as the following:

- (39) *“Sí, un profesor mío de alemán que no controlaba muy bien el español, pero que sí utilizaba palabras coloquiales. Como antes he dicho, es chocante, pero al final crea un vínculo que no surge con formalismos. En este caso, lo consideré un buen profesor porque supo conectar con nosotros a pesar de las grandes lagunas de su español.”*

(“Yes, a German professor of mine who didn’t speak very good Spanish but who did use colloquial words. Like I said before, it’s surprising, but in the end, it creates a connection which doesn’t come about with formal language. In this case, I considered him a good professor because he knew how to connect with us despite the large gaps in his Spanish.”)

²⁴ A complete list of these words is provided in Appendix F. *Tío* was the most commonly cited word, most likely due to a combination of its presence in the debriefing question itself, as well as its ubiquity in Spanish speech (see the corpus analysis in Chapter 3). Several of the words included in the speech samples were referenced (*mola, guay, curro*) as well as vulgar words (*hostia, coño, puta*) and expressions (*vaya puta mierda*).

This comment clearly demonstrates the potential for overcoming linguistic deficiencies with colloquial language. According to this participant, the professor managed to endear himself to his students through the use of colloquial language, even though his overall linguistic proficiency was rather low. According to the participant, not only did colloquial language prove beneficial in this case, it did so for a speaker who exhibited comparatively poor control of the language. Because this anecdote must be interpreted through the lens of the participant who tells it, it is questionable how great the effect was in actuality, but it does seem to have been successful at least at coloring the memory of the participant for the better.

Other comments corroborated this association of positive personality traits with the use of colloquial language by more advanced speakers as well:

(40) *“Sí, un chico noruego hablaba muy bien español entonces muchas expresiones informales las copiaba de los españoles y me hacía gracia. Pero era genial porque le hacía ser mucho más simpático ya que quería adaptarse al hablar corriente de la calle y entre amigos. Era una persona genial”*

(“Yes, a Norwegian guy spoke Spanish really well, so he copied a lot of informal expressions from the Spanish and I thought it was funny. But it was great because it made him seem much nicer since he wanted to adapt himself to the speech current in the street and among friends. He was an amazing person.”)

The results of Section III.3 found the use of colloquial language to have only marginal benefits for the dimension of *solidarity/dynamism*, but this participant clearly associates the use of colloquial language with agreeable personality traits. Specifically, the participant emphasizes the Norwegian’s attempts to accommodate to informal Spanish, more so than the success of those attempts. That is, perhaps the Norwegian’s show of eager accommodation made him appear more personable than if he had simply incorporated such language into his speech in a more natural manner. Chapter 2 discussed the tendency for L2 speakers to specifically mark linguistic creativity with humor so that it is perceived as more permissible by L1 speakers—a similar

phenomenon could be at play here, with the Norwegian's performance playing a bigger role than the language itself. Regardless, colloquial language seems to have provoked a positive reaction in the participant.

While (39) and (40) did not list specific words which caused such positive reactions, other participants cited some of the very items selected for the speech samples:

- (41) *"En tercero de la ESO hice un intercambio con un instituto de Stroud, la mayoría de los ingleses hablaban español de manera formal y muchas veces no pegaba con el contexto, supongo que también tiene que ver con que el inglés es un idioma bastante 'educado'. Aun así conocía un chico, Joe, que usaba palabras como tío, guay, increíble (en general tenía un lenguaje más coloquial) que hacía que la conversación fluyera de forma más natural y cómoda."*

("In ninth grade I did an exchange with a school in Stroud. Most of the English spoke Spanish formally and often it didn't fit with the context—I suppose it also has to do with the fact that English is a very 'polite' language. Even so, I knew a guy, Joe, who used words like *tío*, *guay*, *increíble*, (in general, he had a more colloquial language), which made the conversation flow more naturally and comfortably.")

Tío and *guay* were both selected for inclusion in the speaker guises (see Chapter 3). This participant's comment not only validates the use of these items in preparing the guises, it also demonstrates the positive impact that they can have. In this case, it is difficult to know whether the colloquial language itself improved communication, or perhaps a higher level of general proficiency, but the participant does contrast Joe positively with other classmates who used more formal language.

The above responses have showcased the positive effect of colloquial language. Although colloquial language and vulgar language may overlap, they are not always the same. Some participants failed to make this distinction, and recounted an anecdote conflating the two categories, along with their negative reaction:

- (42) *"En una actuación de magia; el mago era irlandés, y hacia su número en castellano, pero se dirigía al público con el nombre de "Tíos y tías", lo cual era un poco raro. Este señor,*

utilizaba expresiones como "jodido", "Gilipollas", ...La imagen que daba era la de una persona que intentando agradar a un público utilizando expresiones del habla coloquial, lo Único que conseguía era incomodar a los espectadores."

(“In a magic act; the magician was Irish, and he did his number in Spanish, but he referred to the audience as ‘*Tíos y tías*’ [dudes and dudettes], which was a bit strange. This man used expressions like ‘*jodido*’ [fucked], ‘*Gilipollas*’ [asshole]... The image he gave off was that of a person trying to please an audience using colloquial language, but the only thing he managed to do was make the spectators uncomfortable.”)

(42) provides a clear example of how attempts to use colloquial language can go awry. The terms used by the magician, while regionally characteristic of Spain, are for the most part vulgar in nature, and differ from the more mildly-marked informal language selected for use in this study. Many of the responses throughout Sections V and VII have emphasized the importance of using colloquial language in the appropriate context, and the same logically applies to vulgar language: although the magician wished to ingratiate himself to his audience in the same manner as the Norwegian in (40), his use of vulgar language was not judged as appropriate in the given context. Part of the magician’s pragmatic failure may have also come from overreaching his grasp, producing colloquial language in a manner which seemed forced. A similar failure is detailed in (43):

(43) *“En el instituto vino un chico alemán de Erasmus y hablaba muy bien el español pero no pronunciaba del todo bien, parecía un poco robot. Me acuerdo que entre nosotros él hablaba de manera coloquial y nos hacía mucha gracia porque lo hacía de una manera muy forzada. Creo que tampoco tienen que forzarse.”*

(“In high school a German guy came as part of the Erasmus exchange program and he spoke Spanish really well but didn’t pronounce it entirely right, he seemed a little like a robot. I remember that among ourselves he spoke colloquially, and we thought it was really funny because he did it in a really forced manner. I think that they [L2 speakers] shouldn’t overdo it.”)

It is not entirely clear from the participant’s comment whether the poor pronunciation or forced delivery of the colloquial language resulted in its inability to achieve the desired effect.

Because the participant, in extending the anecdote to L2 speakers in general, repeats the warning against forced language, it seems probable that pronunciation was not the biggest issue. After all, the professor mentioned in (39) benefitted from colloquial language despite language deficiencies. Choosing the correct context and style of delivery appears to be a critical ingredient to the successful incorporation of colloquial language.

Vulgar language was not the only category of language variation which inspired participant anecdotes. Some commented on L2 speakers who carried dialects from other Spanish varieties to Spain:

- (44) *“Los estadounidenses normalmente estudian el español de Sudamérica y cuando vienen a España, usan palabras como ‘carro’ en vez de ‘coche’ o ‘lindo’ en vez de ‘bonito’. Es algo que me suele llamar la atención porque aquí usamos otro léxico. También me sorprendía cuando una inglesa siempre decía que era muy ‘perezosa’, porque nosotros siempre decimos ‘vago/a’.”*

(“Americans normally study South American Spanish and when they come to Spain, they use words like ‘carro’ [car] instead of ‘coche’ or ‘lindo’ [cute] instead of ‘bonito’. It’s something that tends to get my attention because here we use a different set of words. It also surprised me when an English girl would always say that she was really ‘perezosa’ [lazy], because we always say ‘vago/a.’”)

The lexical items cited in (44) are all unmarked, regional variants, whereas the purpose of this study was to investigate perceptions toward mildly-marked or marked colloquial variants. Even so, Section II.2 found some indication that pronunciation which does not correspond with regional norms is perceived as deficient, and this comment indicates that the same could be true of regional lexical items. The participant does not state whether the difference in lexicon results in positive or negative reception, but they clearly constitute one more avenue for L2 speakers to draw explicit attention to their language.

Another common thread throughout participant responses was situations in which L1 speakers taught such language to L2 speakers:

- (45) *“La semana pasada estuve con un brasileño y se quedó impresionado al escuchar la palabra ‘como mola’ porque no sabía su verdadero significado. Cuando se lo expliqué, quedó muy satisfecho y empezó a decir ‘como mola’ a todo lo que se le decía.”*

(“Last week I was with a Brazilian and when he heard ‘*como mola*’ [how cool] had a big impression on him, because he didn’t know it’s real meaning. When I explained it to him, he was really content and started to say ‘*como mola*’ to everything that he was told.”)

In the responses recounting similar anecdotes, reactions varied. Some participants discussed sharing colloquial language so that the L2 speakers could better interact with their peers, while others derived amusement from hearing colloquial or vulgar language in a foreign accent. Whether the impetus came from the L2 or the L1 speaker, it appears that such teaching episodes occur with some frequency.

Finally, it should be noted that six participants recounted a lexical item employed by the researcher in the administration of the questionnaire:

- (46) *“Sí, precisamente en la explicación de este text [sic] Estefan ha utilizado la palabra ‘fulanito’ y me ha causado gran impresión. en primer lugar, por conocer la expresión. Y, en segundo lugar, por saber adecuarla al contexto.”*

(“Yes, precisely in the explanation of this test/text, Stefan used the word ‘*fulanito*’ and it made a big impression on me, first of all for knowing the expression, and second, for knowing to use it in the right context.”)

Fulanito is a placeholder name roughly equivalent to ‘what’s his name’ or ‘so-and-so’ in English, and was used by the researcher in providing an example with the directions of the questionnaire. Although its use was unintentional and occurred organically, it provides a real-world example of colloquial language in action. The six participants who noted its use all remarked upon it with similar reactions to those given in Section VII.1, expressing surprise at hearing it come from an L2 speaker, but finding it funny. (46) breaks down the cause of the surprise more specifically, stating that both the knowledge of the word as well as its correct application influence listener reactions.

The responses provided in this section validate the range of effects colloquial language use by L2 speakers can have. Some speakers used colloquialisms to overcome linguistic deficiencies, while others created negative impressions in their attempts. Some participants conflated colloquial- with vulgar language, which in part validates this study's decision to elicit participant attitudes through largely covert means via a matched guise methodology, rather than relying entirely on overt participant opinions. Perhaps most importantly, the large number of participants who were able to recount an anecdote indicates that colloquial language use by L2 speakers is not an altogether rare phenomenon. Although a substantial group of participants were unable to think of a time when they had heard such language, a majority were able to list at least one instance. The fact that those occasions were noteworthy enough to leave an impression on participants' minds suggests that the answers to this dissertation's research questions could potentially have far-reaching impact.

VIII. SUMMARY

This chapter's results found that, while the use of colloquial language is received slightly differently depending on whether or not it is produced by an L2 speaker, that difference is not so substantial so as to discourage second language learners from employing it. Furthermore, individual opinions seem to play a large role: the very language which might be praised by one listener may be criticized by another even when all other things are held equal.

Colloquial language use did not significantly affect measures of linguistic proficiency either positively or negatively. In fact, it did call attention to itself in a way that may have distracted listeners from deficiencies in production, although some participants found colloquial language use incompatible with non-nativelike pronunciation. L2 speakers using colloquial language were also found to be subject to the same *status* penalties as L1 speakers—colloquial

language use was not interpreted as a sign of increased intelligence due to higher linguistic proficiency. It did provide some benefits in terms of *solidarity/dynamism*, but these did not reach the same level as with L1 speakers.

In terms of appropriateness, both L1 and L2 speakers were found to be largely subject to the same contextual constraints, with perhaps a slight prejudice against L2 use of colloquial language. The neutral register overall seemed a safer target for L2 speakers, although judgments varied substantially according to personal opinion.

This range of reactions was corroborated in the debriefing questions. Most participants both claimed to approve of colloquial language use and to have interacted at some point with an L2 speaker who made use of it. A unifying thread of these responses was that L2 use of colloquial language, while highly unusual, did not (with some notable exceptions) necessarily provoke a negative reaction.

The results of this chapter do provide evidence of the double standard advanced by authors in Chapter 2, but the consequences of this double standard appear far less harsh than theorized.²⁵ Although the use of colloquial language may not be a surefire shortcut catapulting second language learners to higher degrees of success, the risks are not so severe as to warrant unilateral discouragement of its use. So long as L2 speakers remain sensitive to the contextual demands of the situation, they seem free to employ colloquial language as much or as little as they like. This behavior may win approval in some and disapproval in others, but on the whole it seems wholly permissible. The following chapter will discuss additional conclusions and considerations.

²⁵ The results might be different for more heavily-marked language, but it should be reiterated that the proponents of the double standard did not limit their assertions specifically to vulgar language.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

I. INTRODUCTION

This final chapter discusses findings with regard to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, their implications for second language learners, and future directions for research. The central question behind the research reported here was how L2 use of colloquial speech is perceived by L1 speakers. In order to investigate this issue, a matched-guise study was performed with 220 L1 speakers of Spanish as participants. These subjects evaluated 8 experimental stimuli which varied according to the register employed as well as the speaker's L1 and gender. The analysis of the data gathered from this questionnaire as it pertains to the dissertation's research questions are presented in the following section.

II. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Research Question 1: How does the use of colloquial language correlate with ratings of linguistic proficiency?

The quantitative analysis found no correlation between the use of colloquial language and ratings of linguistic proficiency, as measured by *global language competence*, *pronunciation*, and *comprehensibility*. *Speaker register* did not appear as a significant predictor in any of the conditional inference trees modeling participant ratings. In their written responses, many subjects claimed that colloquial language affected their judgments, with some feeling that colloquial language compensated for shortcomings in pronunciation, while others found colloquial language use incompatible with non-nativelike production, yet no significant difference was found between ratings of the colloquial guise and those of the neutral one. Because the attitudes expressed in

the written comments were not borne out in the quantitative data, it appears that although individuals may make *post hoc* attributions of their judgments to the use of colloquial language, its use does not have any statistically meaningful effect in terms of actual perception.

Similarly, written responses made fewer explicit comments on foreign accent of the male L2 speaker in the colloquial guise, which suggests that colloquial language might distract listeners from imperfections in pronunciation to some degree. Again, however, this was not supported by the quantitative data. At best, this distraction may only take place on a conscious level, leaving unconscious perceptions unchanged. More conservatively, this may merely have been a side effect of task design in that participants might have been more interested in commenting on the language in space provided to them due to its unusualness in coming from an L2 speaker, even if they were still very much aware of his accent.

In summary, then, the findings of this dissertation indicate that L2 speakers on the whole suffer no penalties or benefits from the use of colloquial language in terms of linguistic proficiency. Individual listeners may have varying attitudes toward its use, but the use of colloquial language does not correlate with changing judgments of linguistic proficiency.

Research Question 2: In terms of personality judgments, do L2 speakers benefit from the same advantages and suffer the same disadvantages of colloquial language use as L1 speakers?

This study found that L2 speakers did suffer the same disadvantages as L1 speakers, perhaps even to a somewhat greater degree, but that they did not benefit from the same advantages. Specifically, both L1 and L2 speakers faced penalties in terms of *status* ratings (*successful, intelligent, educated, competent*) when using colloquial language, with the penalty being slightly amplified for L2 speakers. On the other hand, while L1 speakers saw a small degree of

benefits in terms of *solidarity/dynamism* (*pleasant, nice, sociable, friendly, active, talkative, confident, enthusiastic*), these were reduced or non-existent for the L2 speakers: the male did experience a very marginal increase in ratings, but the female speaker received the same ratings whether or not she employed colloquial language.

The findings on this research question do to some extent corroborate the existence of a double standard as hypothesized by authors such as Valdman in Chapter 2: listeners did in fact respond differently to colloquial language depending on the L1 of the speaker. Even so, the difference in these responses was comparatively small—certainly not so severe as the outright rejection of colloquial language use suggested by supporters of the double standard—and the largest drawback was the inability to access the small measure of *solidarity/dynamism* benefits afforded to L1 speakers. Neither of these factors seem sufficient to advise that language learners swear off colloquial language altogether.

Research Question 3: Do L2 speakers face different standards of acceptability in terms of what contexts permit colloquial language use?

In terms of the *appropriateness* of colloquial language use in both formal and informal contexts, L2 speakers by and large were held to the same standards as L1 speakers. Similar to ratings of *status* and *solidarity/dynamism*, however, L2 speakers did face slightly more exaggerated criticism of its inappropriate use in a formal context and slightly lower benefits from using it in an informal one. L2 speakers are therefore not extended any special leniency regarding the misuse of colloquial language, and they should exercise caution in employing it in the appropriate context.

Research Question 4: Do listeners perceive colloquial language use by an L2 speaker as acceptable?

Opinions toward the *appropriateness* of colloquial language use by L2 speakers varied substantially among participants, both in the numeric as well as the written responses. Some participants strongly endorsed the use of colloquial language, citing it as necessary for acquiring a complete inventory of linguistic capabilities. Others argued that standard language was a more acceptable target for learner production, and many participants held a viewpoint somewhere in between. Two major trends throughout the ambivalent responses of this third category were that L2 speakers should feel free to use colloquial language, so long as they are careful to only use it in the appropriate context, and that although such language might sound strange coming from them, there is nothing inherently wrong with its use. Thus, although colloquial language use proved a controversial topic among participants, it seemed more a question of personal opinion than any overarching tendency uniform among L1 speakers.

Research Question 5: Does the gender of the speaker play a role in any of the above issues?

The gender of the speaker had very little effect on any of the questions investigated in this dissertation. In the few cases where it did, it seemed that male L2 speakers had a slight advantage in using colloquial language over females. This was seen in the ratings of *solidarity/dynamism*, where use of colloquial language by the male correlated with slightly increased evaluations, whereas ratings of the female speaker remained unchanged regardless of what register she employed. Furthermore, although the male received lower ratings of *pronunciation* than the female (a factor most likely attributable to individual differences), written

comments criticizing that pronunciation dropped for males from 31 in the neutral guise to 18 in the colloquial one, while they increased from 22 to 26 for females. As mentioned above, however, self-introspection by participants must always be taken with a grain of salt, so it is difficult to make reliable claims based on this finding alone. Overall, it seems that male and female use of colloquial language is perceived largely the same, with the possibility that males have slightly more access to its benefits.

III. GENERAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Synthesizing the results of the specific research questions presented above gives insight into the central inquiry of this dissertation: how do L1 speakers perceive colloquial language use by L2 speakers? The results reported here suggest that these perceptions are slightly more critical of L2 speakers than of L1 speakers using the same language. L2 speakers suffer the same negative consequences as L1 speakers, possibly to a greater degree, without having access to the same benefits. To this extent, a certain double standard does appear to exist against the use of colloquial language by L2 speakers, and one could argue that the absence of rewards along with increased risks validates the claims throughout Chapter 2 that L2 speakers should avoid colloquial language use.

Nevertheless, the results of this study actually speak against this mode of thinking more than they support it. While it is true that L2 speakers were judged more harshly on some measures when using the same colloquial language as L1 speakers, the magnitude of this difference can hardly be considered so substantial as to argue that L2 speakers should never use it. Furthermore, although L2 speakers did not necessarily have access to the same benefits as L1 speakers, they did not experience additional drawbacks in these areas, simply the absence of certain advantages. For example, although L2 speakers did not unilaterally receive the same

solidarity/dynamism benefits as L1 speakers, their ratings in this category did not suffer in comparison to the neutral register, they simply remained the same.

Moreover, many participants expressed favorable attitudes toward colloquial language in their written comments. As highlighted in Table 5 (Chapter 4), 186 of 216²⁶ participants indicated in the debriefing at least some degree of a favorable attitude towards colloquial language use by L2 speakers. While it is true that explicit participant judgments are often poor indicators of their unconscious beliefs, this number does indicate some level of approval; certainly, there does not seem to be widespread prejudice against it. Attitudes toward colloquial language appeared to vary according to personal opinion, with some participants supporting its use, and others expressing the opposite opinion.

For this reason, rather than unilaterally discouraging second language learners from using colloquial language or making the equally unreasonable assertion that it should dominate a learner's vocabulary, these results perhaps best support a policy of careful consideration in its application. As seen by numerical and written responses to Research Question 3, the level of formality required of a particular situation merits considerable attention, and the wide array of opinions emerging from Research Question 4 demonstrate that learners should also realize that some listeners may hold diametrically opposed opinions on the use of colloquial language. So long as an L2 speaker exercises caution in the context of its use, the results of this study do not provide any strong reason to discourage them from using it. Chapter 2 cited several examples of the excitement such language can generate in learners and the disappointment when it is not made available to them; if these learners can grasp the importance of only using colloquial language when appropriate, there seems to be no real reason to discourage them from adopting

²⁶ As mentioned in the original description of the table, 4 of the 220 participants did not provide answers to this question

it. Standard language may indeed be a safer target, but the current findings did not give reason to think that colloquial language should be avoided *per se*.

IV. LIMITATIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Recent years have seen the emergence of numerous investigations of the acquisition of horizontal variation in second language learners, but very few studies have examined how nonstandard variants are perceived by L1 speakers. This study attempted to address this gap by examining perceptions of colloquial language use, but more research is required on this complex issue. For example, the participants used in this study were not only representative of a specific subgroup of the population in that they were students attending an institution of higher education, but moreover, these students were specifically involved in the study of language, and therefore likely had attitudes toward linguistic variation which differ from the general populace.

Furthermore, although this research investigated lexical variants, additional assessment of the effects of nonstandard phonological and morphological variation could provide direction for future studies. The investigation of phonological variants could address one of the principal limitations of the experimental design. Although this study demonstrated that the matched-guise format can be successfully applied to lexical variation, it is most typically performed with phonological variants, meaning that the same participant can be exposed to matching experimental stimuli. Because the guise text was changed between stimuli in order to incorporate the lexical variants, participants had to be convinced that they were listening to very similar, yet slightly different texts, and the same speaker was not presented more than once to each participant in order to reduce artificiality. This meant that ratings of neutral and colloquial guises of the same speaker were compared between participants, rather than each participant being provided with a matching pair. That is, two different participants rated the neutral and colloquial

stimulus from the same speaker. In a more traditional matched-guise study investigating phonological variants, however, participants listen to the same text repeatedly, making it easier to present the same speaker under different guises without alerting participants and thereby elicit more comparable data points.

Another limitation of this study was the inclusion of only one level of proficiency for the L2 speakers. While both speakers were proficient in the language, many written comments discussed the need to master a formal register before an informal one—it is therefore possible that attitudes toward colloquial language may vary according to speaker proficiency. Repeating the study with a novice and an advanced learner would provide insight into whether attitudes differ with speakers of different levels.

Another research avenue of particular interest would be the investigation of the perception of nonstandard variants outside the locale where they are common among L1 speakers. Ringer-Hilfinger (2012) recorded the reluctance of American students studying abroad in Spain to adopt the Peninsular Spanish [0] due to its absence inside the United States. Obviously, social pressures exist which encourage conformity with the local community, but because Peninsular Spanish is a prestige variety, L2 speakers who use it outside of Spain may experience some benefits. Knowledge of these benefits available to them upon returning home might encourage students to be more willing to adopt the variant while studying abroad. Similar studies could be performed using lexical variation, perhaps even employing the same experimental design and stimuli as this dissertation, but with a participant base from a non-Peninsular Spanish community. Such studies may not only be enlightening with regard to L1 speaker perceptions, but they could potentially offer additional insight into the wide array of existing research on L2 acquisition of nonstandard variation.

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Appendix

A. Complete DP and Frequency List from CdE

Word	Neutral Equivalent	Translation of Neutral Equivalent	DP	Frequency Count
<i>tío</i>	<i>persona</i>	person	0.8989	19263
<i>rollo</i>	<i>cosa aburrida</i>	boring thing	0.9206	11058
<i>pasta</i>	<i>dinero</i>	money	0.9248	14254
<i>chaval</i>	<i>niño</i>	boy	0.9448	9160
<i>pasada</i>	<i>cosa divertida</i>	fun thing	0.9450	6524
<i>pelí</i>	<i>película</i>	movie	0.9494	17645
<i>chorrada</i>	<i>tontería</i>	nonsense	0.9582	4285
<i>pega</i>	<i>inconveniente</i>	problem	0.9629	4234
<i>cabrear</i>	<i>enfadarse</i>	to get angry	0.9660	3135
<i>molar</i>	<i>gustar</i>	to like	0.9665	4898
<i>crack</i>	<i>experto</i>	expert	0.9672	3993
<i>coco</i>	<i>cabeza</i>	head	0.9700	3766
<i>coña</i>	<i>broma</i>	joke	0.9740	2417
<i>guay</i>	<i>bueno</i>	good	0.9746	3016
<i>majo</i>	<i>simpático</i>	nice	0.9752	2327
<i>curro</i>	<i>trabajo</i>	job	0.9757	3276
<i>afanar</i>	<i>robar</i>	steal	0.9819	987
<i>finde</i>	<i>fin de semana</i>	weekend	0.9825	2772
<i>mosquear</i>	<i>enfadarse</i>	to get angry	0.9834	1134
<i>cachondeo</i>	<i>broma</i>	joke	0.9837	1458
<i>patear</i>	<i>caminar mucho</i>	to walk a lot	0.9840	1337
<i>cacharro</i>	<i>dispositivo/ aparato/ instrumento</i>	apparatus	0.9860	1546
<i>mogollón</i>	<i>mucho</i>	a lot	0.9865	1129
<i>chungo</i>	<i>difícil</i>	difficult	0.9865	1057
<i>jeta</i>	<i>cara</i>	face	0.9876	886
<i>palmar</i>	<i>morir</i>	to die	0.9889	899
<i>cotilleo</i>	<i>chisme</i>	gossip	0.9891	864
<i>culebrón</i>	<i>telenovela</i>	soap opera	0.9897	1293
<i>pasmado</i>	<i>tonto</i>	idiot	0.9898	469
<i>jaleo</i>	<i>confusión/ caos</i>	confusion/chaos	0.9906	777
<i>follón</i>	<i>complicación</i>	complication	0.9907	728
<i>gamberro</i>	<i>bromista</i>	joker	0.9911	722
<i>currante</i>	<i>trabajador</i>	worker	0.9915	612
<i>boli</i>	<i>bolígrafo</i>	pen	0.9923	910
<i>trincar</i>	<i>tomar/ agarrar/ coger</i>	take/grab	0.9926	588
<i>chapar</i>	<i>estudiar</i>	study	0.9929	401

molón	<i>agradable</i>	pleasant	0.9931	1177
parida	<i>tontería</i>	nonsense	0.9938	474
voltio	<i>vuelta / paseo</i>	walk	0.9939	622
bocata	<i>sandwich / bocadillo</i>	sandwich	0.9942	784
chutar	<i>funcionar</i>	to work	0.9945	522
tranqui	<i>tranquilo</i>	calm	0.9947	402
forofo	<i>aficionado</i>	fan	0.9947	444
trola	<i>mentira</i>	lie	0.9948	290
berenjenal	<i>lío</i>	mess	0.9949	328
machacón	<i>aburrido / monótono</i>	boring / monotonous	0.9951	368
apechugar	<i>responsabilizarse</i>	to take responsibility for	0.9951	317
pajolero	<i>insignificante</i>	insignificant	0.9952	300
colado	<i>enamorado</i>	in love	0.9957	257
cañero	<i>exigente</i>	demanding	0.9960	451
menda	<i>persona</i>	person	0.9961	419
peñazo	<i>aburrido</i>	boring	0.9961	206
mani	<i>manifestación</i>	demonstration	0.9963	409
chinchar	<i>molestar</i>	to bother	0.9964	150
cachondear	<i>bromear</i>	to joke	0.9964	239
fardar	<i>presumir</i>	to fake	0.9965	373
cisco	<i>casado</i>	married	0.9966	1197
forrado	<i>rico</i>	rich	0.9967	161
birra	<i>cerveza</i>	beer	0.9968	508
achuchar	<i>empujar</i>	to push	0.9968	238
chachi	<i>bueno</i>	good	0.9968	353
coso	<i>cosa</i>	thing	0.9969	477
maromo	<i>hombre</i>	man	0.9969	187
chalado	<i>loco</i>	crazy	0.9970	215
rular	<i>funcionar</i>	to work	0.9971	203
cachas	<i>musculoso</i>	muscular	0.9971	188
mamporro	<i>golpe</i>	blow	0.9973	197
rifirrafe	<i>discusión</i>	argument	0.9973	116
empollar	<i>estudiar mucho</i>	to study a lot	0.9973	181
guarrada	<i>cosa asquerosa</i>	disgusting thing	0.9975	281
chorra	<i>suerte</i>	luck	0.9976	215
porfa	<i>por favor</i>	please	0.9976	84
rasca	<i>frío</i>	cold	0.9977	141
cogorza	<i>borrachera</i>	drunkenness	0.9977	76
mocoso	<i>niño</i>	boy	0.9977	207
neuro	<i>euro</i>	euro	0.9978	133
cenizo	<i>mala suerte</i>	bad luck	0.9978	192
pelma	<i>pesado</i>	annoying	0.9978	97

chacha	<i>servienta</i>	maid	0.9978	171
fiambre	<i>muerto/cadáver</i>	cadaver	0.9978	332
ceporro	<i>ignorante</i>	ignorant	0.9979	103
quisqui	<i>todo el mundo</i>	everyone	0.9979	146
pachanga	<i>fiesta</i>	party	0.9980	210
leuro	<i>euro</i>	euro	0.9980	146
chupatintas	<i>burócrata</i>	bureaucrat	0.9981	65
mangar	<i>robar</i>	steal	0.9982	181
rácano	<i>tacaño</i>	cheap	0.9982	143
achuchón	<i>empujón</i>	push	0.9982	230
roñoso	<i>tacaño</i>	cheap	0.9983	107
carcamal	<i>persona anciana/ decrepita</i>	old person	0.9983	96
morriña	<i>nostalgia</i>	nostalgia	0.9984	277
trullo	<i>cárcel</i>	prison	0.9986	173
guita	<i>dinero</i>	money	0.9986	179
majara	<i>loco</i>	crazy	0.9986	104
chof	<i>triste/ deprimido</i>	sad/depressed	0.9987	72
bareto	<i>bar</i>	bar	0.9987	108
merluzo	<i>tonto</i>	idiot	0.9987	187
chuzo	<i>borracho</i>	drunk	0.9987	82
maco	<i>cárcel</i>	prison	0.9988	37
panoli	<i>persona ingenua/ tonta</i>	foolish person	0.9988	130
mamado	<i>borracho</i>	drunk	0.9988	60
cochambroso	<i>viejo/ feo</i>	old/ugly	0.9989	113
yayo	<i>abuelo</i>	grandpa	0.9989	140
trena	<i>cárcel</i>	prison	0.9990	97
buenorro	<i>guapo</i>	handsome	0.9990	162
chirona	<i>cárcel</i>	prison	0.9991	46
fardón	<i>presumido</i>	arrogant	0.9992	126
palique	<i>charla</i>	chat	0.9992	58
bebercio	<i>bebida</i>	drink	0.9992	42
potar	<i>vomit</i>	vomit	0.9992	79
gansada	<i>tontería</i>	nonsense	0.9992	49
basca	<i>gente/grupo de amigos</i>	people/group of friends	0.9993	42
catapún	<i>hace muchos años</i>	a long time ago	0.9994	29
fullero	<i>tramposo</i>	cheater	0.9994	60
mazar	<i>emborracharse</i>	to get drunk	0.9995	30
diñar	<i>morir</i>	to die	0.9995	35
jamar	<i>comer</i>	to eat	0.9995	37
cheli	<i>jerga</i>	slang	0.9996	60
buga	<i>automóvil</i>	car	0.9996	62
papeo	<i>comida</i>	food	0.9997	25

apencar	<i>responsabilizarse</i>	to take responsibility for	0.9997	11
gasofa	<i>gasolina</i>	gas	0.9997	40
catear	<i>suspender (un examen o curso)</i>	to fail	0.9997	36
porsiaca	<i>por si acaso</i>	just in case	0.9997	96
marujeo	<i>chisme</i>	gossip	0.9997	85
baldado	<i>destrozado</i>	destroyed	0.9997	21
cumple	<i>cumpleaños</i>	birthday	0.9997	30
papear	<i>comer</i>	to eat	0.9997	22
choricear	<i>robar</i>	to steal	0.9997	27
gepeto	<i>cara</i>	face	0.9998	18
mazas	<i>musculoso</i>	muscular	0.9998	44
cachirulo	<i>cosa</i>	thing	0.9998	27
furular	<i>funcionar</i>	to work	0.9998	7
tangar	<i>estafar/ timar</i>	to rip off	0.9998	33
amuermar	<i>aburrir</i>	to bore	0.9998	32
pajorero	<i>insignificante</i>	insignificant	0.9998	10
panoja	<i>dinero</i>	money	0.9999	27
guillar	<i>irse</i>	to go away	0.9999	5
peluco	<i>reloj</i>	clock	0.9999	11
tolai	<i>desorientado</i>	disorientated	0.9999	12
bolinga	<i>borracho</i>	drunk	0.9999	14
chorar	<i>robar</i>	to steal	0.9999	20
escopetado	<i>apurado/ con prisa</i>	in a hurry	0.9999	12
tocha	<i>nariz</i>	nose	0.9999	3
ñaño	<i>niño</i>	boy	0.9999	7
dabuti	<i>excelente</i>	excellent	0.9999	8
antimorbo	<i>repulsivo/ repelente</i>	repulsive	0.9999	3
pajotero	<i>insignificante</i>	insignificant	0.9999	7
jala	<i>comida</i>	food	1.0000	12
campanear	<i>pasear/ dar una vuelta</i>	to take a walk	1.0000	2
ñasco	<i>mordisco</i>	bite	1.0000	4
bordeo	<i>navaja</i>	knife	1.0000	1
canallesca	<i>prensa</i>	press	1.0000	1
pelas	<i>taxista</i>	taxi driver	1.0000	2
gayumbos	<i>calzoncillos</i>	underwear	1.0000	1
petado	<i>estropeado</i>	broken	1.0000	1
abortez	<i>tontería</i>	nonsense	NaN	0
Barna	<i>Barcelona</i>	Barcelona	NaN	0
berzotas	<i>tonto</i>	idiot	NaN	0
Capi	<i>Madrid</i>	Madrid	NaN	0
chinar	<i>agobiar/ enfadar</i>	to get fed up with	NaN	0
chorimangui	<i>ladrón</i>	thief	NaN	0

coscar	<i>darse cuenta</i>	to notice	NaN	0
currar	<i>trabajar</i>	to work	NaN	0
curre	<i>trabajo</i>	work	NaN	0
despitorrar	<i>reír mucho</i>	to laugh a lot	NaN	0
embolingar	<i>emborracharse</i>	to get drunk	NaN	0
esopeteado	<i>apurado/ con prisa</i>	to be in a hurry	NaN	0
jujanas	<i>tacaño</i>	cheap	NaN	0
mazado	<i>borracho</i>	to be drunk	NaN	0
trallar	<i>vomit</i>	to vomit	NaN	0

B. Scripts

1. Experimental Scripts

Both experimental scripts contained the same language, with the exception of the words indicated in bold. The left word in each pair was the one used in the neutral version of the script, and the right word was the one used in the colloquial version.

*Este verano, yo fui a Hawái durante tres semanas con mi familia y mi abuela. Durante las vacaciones, jugué al golf muchas veces y fue **(increíble/una pasada)** porque podía ver el mar desde donde jugaba al golf. Jugamos con un **(hombre/ tío)** del **(trabajo/curro)** de mi padre, y era un **(experto/crack)**! Siempre nos ganó fácilmente, pero no nos **(enfadamos/cabreamos)** porque era muy **(simpático/majo)** y siempre estaba de **(broma/cachondeo)**. También, nosotros celebramos el cumpleaños de mi padre. Fuimos a un restaurante que tenía el bistec más delicioso del mundo. A todos en mi familia les **(gusta/mola)** la idea de cenar y pasar tiempo juntos durante una buena comida. Aunque me encantó el viaje, **(no me gustó/me mosqueó)** que pasáramos cada **(fin de semana/finde)** viendo **(películas/pelis)**. Fue **(aburrido/un rollo)** quedarnos dentro cuando habíamos gastado **(tanto dinero/tanta pasta)** en viajar a Hawái. Pero fueron unas vacaciones muy relajadas, lo cual fue la **(mejor parte/parte más guay)**.*

Translation: This summer, I went to Hawaii for three weeks with my family and my grandmother. During the vacation, I played golf several times and it was **(incredible/amazing)** because I could see the sea from where I was playing golf. We played with a **(man/guy)** from my dad's **(work/job)**, and he was **(an expert/a whiz)**! He always beat us easily, but we didn't get **(mad/pissed off)** because he was really **(pleasant/nice)** and he was always **(making jokes/messing around)**. Also, we celebrated my dad's birthday. We went to a restaurant that had the most delicious steak in the world. Everyone in my family **(likes/thinks...is cool)** the idea of eating and spending time together during a nice meal. Although I loved the trip, **(I didn't like/It pissed me off)** that we spent every **(weekend/weekend)** watching **(films/movies)**. It was **(boring/a drag)** to stay inside when we had

spend so much **(money/cash)** on traveling to Hawaii. But the vacation was really relaxed, which was the **(best/coolest)** part.

2. Distractor Script

Pasé tres semanas de vacaciones este verano en Hawái con mi familia y mi abuela. Jugamos al golf en un lugar muy bonito al lado del mar. Alguien que trabaja con mi padre jugó con nosotros, y jugaba muy, muy bien. Fue imposible ganar contra ese hombre, pero no podíamos estar frustrados con una persona tan divertida como él. Durante esas vacaciones celebramos el cumpleaños de mi padre también. Fuimos a un restaurante para comer unos bistecs increíblemente deliciosos. El concepto de pasar tiempo cenando juntos y compartiendo comida es muy importante para toda mi familia. Me gustó muchísimo el viaje, pero algo que no me gustó tanto es que siempre viéramos películas los fines de semana. Me pareció una pérdida de dinero viajar a Hawái y después no salir afuera. En general, el viaje fue muy relajado, lo cual fue mi parte favorita.

I spent three weeks on vacation this summer in Hawaii with my family and my grandma. We played golf in a really pretty place next to the sea. Someone that works with my dad played with us, and he played really, really well. It was impossible to beat that man, but we couldn't be frustrated with a person as funny as him. During this vacation we celebrated my dad's birthday, too. We went to a restaurant to eat some incredibly delicious steaks. The concept of spending time eating together and sharing food is really important for my whole family. I liked the trip a lot, but something that I didn't like so much is that we always watched movies on the weekend. I thought it was a waste of time to travel to Hawaii and then not go outside. In general, the trip was really relaxed, which was my favorite part.

3. Original Passages from which Scripts were Adapted

(underlined portions were used in the creation of the scripts)

1. Este verano, yo fui a Hawái por tres semanas con mi familia y mi abuela. Durante la vacación, jugaba al golf dos veces y era muy divertido porque podía ver el mar de donde jugaba al golf. También, nos celebramos el cumpleaños cincuenta de mi padre. Fuimos a un restaurante con el bistec mas delicioso del mundo. Era un vacación muy relajada.
2. De verdad no recuerdo mis últimas vacaciones, pero unos años atrás mi familia y yo fuimos a una casita al lado de un lago que se llama Lago Elizabeth. No hicimos mucho. Bebimos cerveza y comimos comida sabrosísima que mi papá preparó. A todos en mi familia les gusta la comida y la idea de cenar y pasar tiempo sobre una comida buena.
3. En las últimas vacaciones he viajado a seis diferentes países durante las vacaciones de navidad. Primero fui a Liechtenstein para visitar a mi amiga y su novio. Estuve con ellos una semana y hicimos una cena para navidad. Me la pase muy bien. Después viaje a otros países como Alemania. Aunque me encanto el viaje, no me gusto que hacia mucho frio. He conocido a muchas personas durante el viaje, lo cual fue la mejor parte.

C. Questionnaire

Note that this section only includes the questions provided to participants. The informed consent form, instructions, progress pages, and demographic questions are not included here. Note also that a series of 7 radio buttons were provided between the poles of each semantic differential scale; only the pole names are included here.

1. Items evaluating *global language competence, pronunciation, and comprehensibility*

En términos generales, ¿cómo evaluaría el dominio global del español de esta hablante?

(No competente en español / Muy competente)

¿Cómo evaluaría la pronunciación del hablante?

(Fuerte acento extranjero / Sin acento extranjero)

¿Cómo evaluaría la dificultad de entender a el hablante?

(Muy difícil de entender / Muy fácil de entender)

En las 3 preguntas anteriores, ¿puede identificar alguna característica específica del lenguaje del hablante que haya influido en su evaluación?

Translations:

In general terms, how would you evaluate the **overall mastery** of Spanish of this speaker?

(Not competent in Spanish/Very competent)

How would you evaluate the **pronunciation** of the speaker?

(Strong foreign accent/No foreign accent)

How would you evaluate the **difficulty of understanding** the speaker?

(Very difficult to understand/Very easy to understand)

In the three preceding questions, can you identify any specific characteristic of the speaker's language which influenced your evaluation?

2. Items evaluating *appropriateness* according to context

Pensando en las palabras que usa el hablante, ¿sería su lenguaje adecuado para contar esta anécdota a unos amigos en casa?

(Muy poco adecuado / Muy adecuado)

Pensando en las palabras que usa el hablante, ¿sería su lenguaje adecuado para contar esta anécdota a un policía?

(Muy poco adecuado / Muy adecuado)

En las 2 preguntas anteriores, ¿puede identificar alguna característica específica del lenguaje del hablante que haya influido en su evaluación?

Translations:

Thinking about the words which the speaker uses, would his language be appropriate for telling this anecdote to **some friends at home**? (Very inappropriate/Very inappropriate)

Thinking about the words which the speaker uses, would his language be appropriate for telling this anecdote to **a policeman**? (Very inappropriate/Very appropriate)

In the three preceding questions, can you identify any specific characteristic of the speaker's language which influenced your evaluation?

3. Items evaluating *appropriateness* for use by L2 speaker

¿Le parecería adecuado que un hablante no nativo usara las palabras específicas que utiliza este hablante?

(Muy poco adecuado / Muy adecuado)

Por favor explique su respuesta.

Translations:

Would you think it appropriate for a non-native speaker to use the specific words which this speaker uses?

(Very inappropriate/very appropriate)

Please explain your answer.

4. Items evaluating *status* and *solidarity/dynamism*

El hablante me parece una persona...

(Poco exitosa / Exitosa)

(Poco inteligente / Inteligente)

(Inculta / Culta)

(Incompetente / Competente)

(Desagradable / Agradable)

(Antipática / Simpática)

(Insociable / Sociable)

(Poco amigable/ Amigable)

(Pasiva / Activa)

(Tímida / Habladora)

(Insegura / Segura de sí misma)

(Indecisa / Entusiasta)

Translations:

The speaker seems like a person who is...

(Unsuccessful/Successful)

(Unintelligent/Intelligent)

(Uneducated/Educated)

(Incompetent/Competent)

(Unpleasant/Pleasant)

(Mean/Nice)

(Unsociable/Sociable)

(Unfriendly/Friendly)

(Passive/Active)

(Shy/Talkative)

(Unconfident/Confident)

(Indecisive/Enthusiastic)

5. Debriefing essay questions

¿Qué piensa ud. del uso de la jerga coloquial por hablantes no nativos del español? ¿Le impresiona si usan palabras como "tío", "molar", "currar", etc., o le resulta raro? ¿Cree que los hablantes no nativos deberían limitarse a una forma de hablar más formal?

¿Se le ocurre alguna anécdota en que escuchó a un hablante no nativo del español usar algún tipo de jerga u otro lenguaje coloquial? ¿En qué contexto fue? ¿Cuál fue su impresión y por qué? ¿Recuerda ud. cuáles fueron las palabras específicas que le llamaron la atención?

Translations:

What do you think about the use of colloquial slang by non-native speakers of Spanish? Does it impress you if they use words like *tío*, *molar*, *currar*, etc., or do you find it strange? Do you think that non-native speakers should limit themselves to a more formal manner of speaking?

Can you think of any anecdotes in which you heard a non-native Spanish speaker use some type of slang or other colloquial language? In what context was it? What was your impression and why? Do you remember what were the specific words which got your attention?

6. Items evaluating *tolerance* scale

Cuando tengo que hablar con gente extranjera que no controla bien el español, me siento frustrado.

(No estoy nada de acuerdo /Estoy muy de acuerdo)

Me gusta aprender sobre culturas no españolas.

(No estoy nada de acuerdo /Estoy muy de acuerdo)

Me gusta compartir mi cultura con gente extranjera.

(No estoy nada de acuerdo /Estoy muy de acuerdo)

Me gusta o me gustaría tener amigos de otros países.

(No estoy nada de acuerdo /Estoy muy de acuerdo)

Los extranjeros nunca pueden llegar a integrarse completamente en otra cultura.

(No estoy nada de acuerdo /Estoy muy de acuerdo)

Me gusta o me gustaría que haya estudiantes extranjeros en mis clases.

(No estoy nada de acuerdo /Estoy muy de acuerdo)

Translations:

When I have to talk with foreigners who don't speak Spanish well, I feel frustrated

(Completely disagree/Strongly agree)

I like learning about non-Spanish cultures

(Completely disagree/Strongly agree)

I like sharing my culture with foreigners

(Completely disagree/Strongly agree)

I like having or I would like to have friends from other countries

(Completely disagree/Strongly agree)

Foreigners can never end up integrating themselves completely in another culture

(Completely disagree/Strongly agree)

I like that there are or I would like there to be foreign students in my classes

(Completely disagree/Strongly agree)

D. Additional Conditional Inference Trees

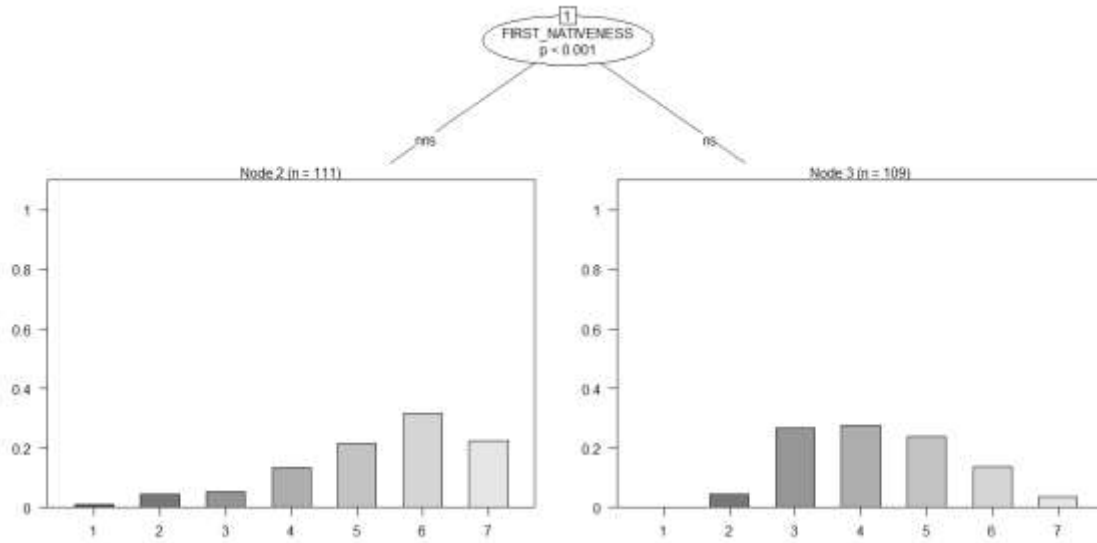


Figure 11: *Global language competence* ratings of distractor (30% classification accuracy)

Figure 12: Complete conditional inference tree

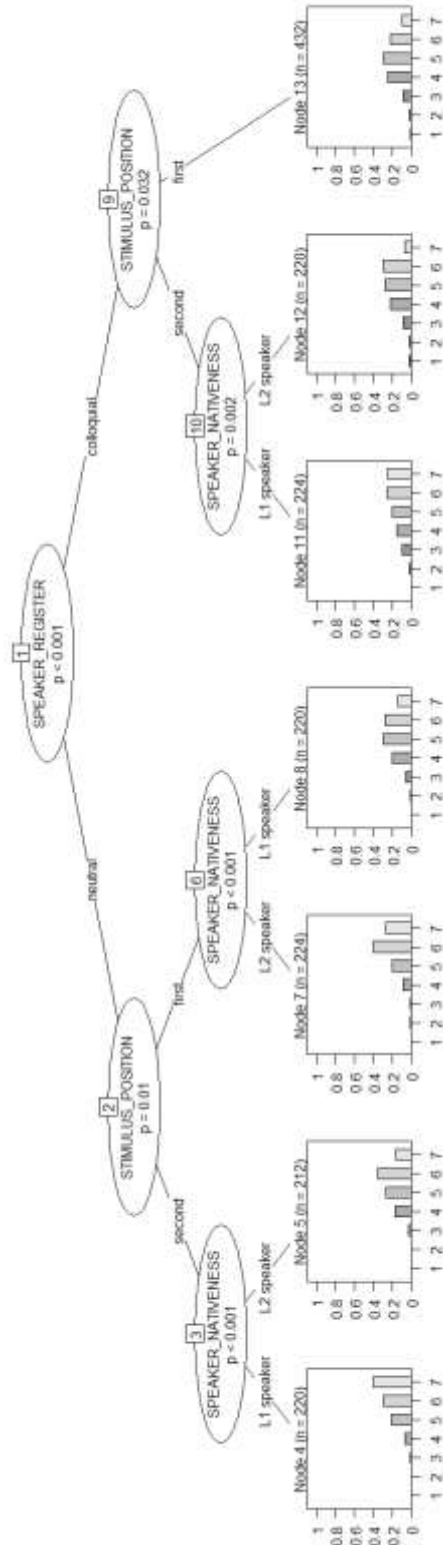
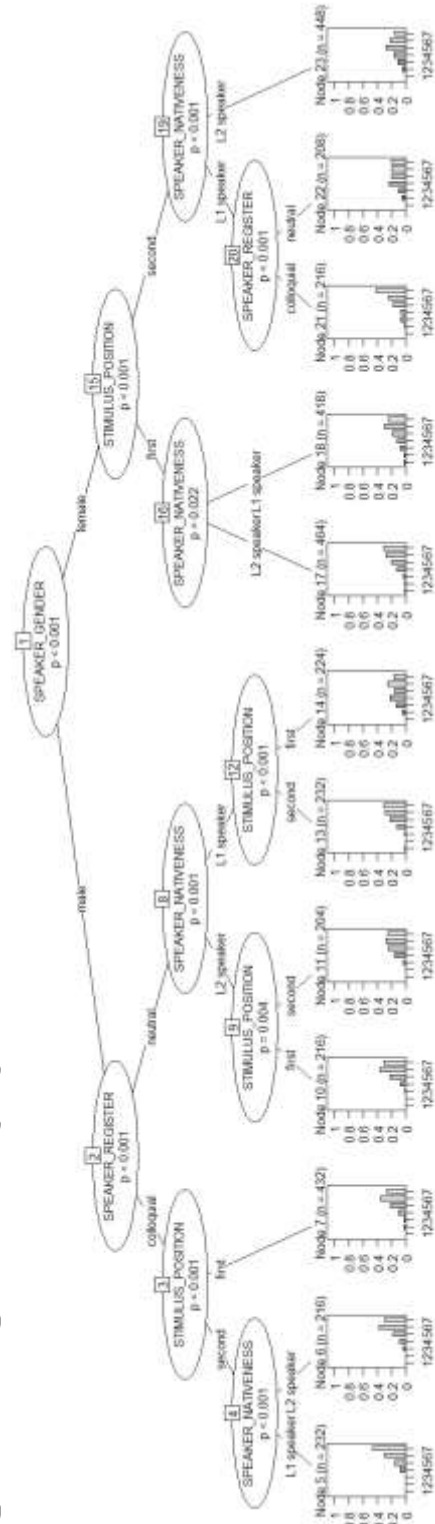


Figure 13: Complete solidarity/dynamism conditional inference tree



E. Standard Deviation and Proportion of Variance for Principal Components

Analysis

	PC1	PC2	PC3
Standard deviation	2.608	1.2372	0.9011
Proportion of variance	0.567	0.1276	0.0677
Cumulative proportion	0.567	0.6945	0.7622

F. List of Colloquialisms Cited by Participants in Debriefing Question #2

Term	Translation	Number of occurrences
Tío/tía	Dude	27
Joder	Fuck	6
Mola	Cool	5
Acho	Wow	4
Cabrón	Bastard	3
Macho	Wow/dude	3
Tete	Mess	2
Colega	Buddy	2
Guay	Cool	2
Hermano	Brother	2
Hostia	Jesus	2
Qué fuerte	Wow	2
Tronco	Buddy	2
"Me piro, que me toca currar"	I'm out, I gotta work	1
¡Menuda mierda!	What a crock of shit	1
¡Tío es como una princesa!	Dude, she's like a princess!	1
¿Qué pasa tío?	What's up, dude?	1

"Olé qué arte!"	Wow, what skill!	1
Asqueroso	Gross	1
Birra	Beer	1
Carro	Car	1
Cerve	Beer	1
Chachi	Great	1
Choni	Trashy	1
Chulo	Arrogant	1
Chúpamela	Suck it	1
Chusta	Shit	1
Compare	(Unknown, perhaps <i>compadre</i> , "buddy")	1
Compi	Buddy	1
Coño	Fuck	1
Curro	Job	1
Dale caña	Tell off	1
Darle un calo	Take a drag	1
De parranda	Out partying	1
De puta madre	Awesome	1

Estar rayado	To be crazy	1
Feliz navidad	Merry christmas	1
Fiesta	Party	1
Fiestuqui	Party	1
Gilipollas	Asshole	1
Hace un calor que te torras	To be roasting	1
Hala	Wow	1
Hermanico	Little brother	1
Increíble	Incredible	1
Jodido	Fucked	1
Lindo	Sweet	1
Madre mía	Wow	1
Me cago en la puta	Fuck my life	1
Me la suda	I don't give a shit	1
No me digas	You don't say	1
No seas mierda	Don't be a shit	1
Pa que	Why (contr.)	1
Peña	Crowd	1

Perezosa	Lazy	1
Pita	Work	1
Puta	Bitch	1
Qué chuli	How cool	1
Qué lache	How embarrassing	1
Qué susto	You scared me	1
Royazo (rollazo)	Drag	1
Sábado sabadete camisa nueva y polvete	To have one's weekly intercourse	1
Ser el puto amo/la puta ama	To be the boss	1
Siesta	Nap	1
Tonto de mierda	Shitty idiot	1
Un largo	Fire	1
Vamos a echarnos unos jajas	To have a laugh	1
Vaya puta mierda	What a crock of shit	1